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BECHUANALAND



BECHUANALAND

BY

B. A. YOUNG

LONDON

HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

1966

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A series of illustrated volumes under the sponsorship of the Colonial Office dealing with the United Kingdom's dependent territories, the way their peoples live, and how they are governed. The series has been designed to fill the place between official Blue Books on the one hand and the writings of occasional visitors on the other, to be authoritative and readable, and to give a vivid yet accurate picture. The books are being written by established authors whose qualifications include, where possible, experience of colonial administration and first-hand knowledge of the territory concerned. Neither Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom nor the Governments of the territories necessarily associate themselves with the personal views expressed by the authors. Each volume will contain maps and be fully illustrated.

FOREWORD

TO THE CORONA LIBRARY

By the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston S. Churchill

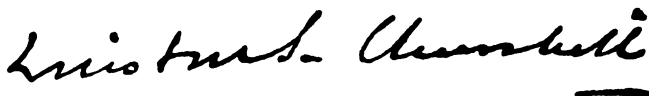
K.G., O.M., C.H., M.P.

Nor since the days of the Roman Empire has a single nation carried so great a responsibility for the lives of men and women born outside her shores as Great Britain does today. Within her forty or so dependent territories dwell eighty million people for whose welfare and enlightenment Britain is, to a greater or lesser degree, answerable.

There has been no lack of critics, at home and abroad, to belittle Britain's colonial achievement and to impugn her motives. But the record confounds them. Look where you will, you will find that the British have ended wars, put a stop to savage customs, opened churches, schools and hospitals, built railways, roads and harbours, and developed the natural resources of the countries so as to mitigate the almost universal, desperate poverty. They have given freely in money and materials and in the services of a devoted band of Civil Servants; yet no tax is imposed upon any of the colonial peoples that is not spent by their own governments on projects for their own good.

I write 'their own governments' advisedly, for however much diverse conditions may necessitate different approaches, the British have for long had one goal in view for their overseas territories: their ultimate development into nations freely associated within the Commonwealth framework. The present state of the Commonwealth is the proof of the sincerity of this policy.

It is because I believe that Britain's colonial record is too little known and her policies too little understood that I welcome the books of the Corona Library. The aim of these books is to present a contemporary portrait, at once reliable and attractive, of each territory. I warmly commend the series to the attention of the public at home and abroad, for if these publications do even a little to clear away the clouds of misunderstanding and prejudice that have gathered round the very idea of colonial government, they will have been well worth while.



Chartwell, September 1956

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The back jacket is based on motifs burned into the backs of wooden spoons and also used in beadwork in parts of Bechuanaland.

JACKET, ENDPAPERS AND DRAWINGS BY ANTHONY PRINSEP

INTRODUCTION

Bechuanaland is advancing so swiftly into the mainstream of 'emergent' African life that the most satisfactory way to write about it today would be in the form of a loose-leaf book. The Tswana people who form the great majority of its population are a singularly peaceful and friendly folk who have never exerted any urgent pressure on the government for social reform. As a result, for seventy years or so the country coasted happily along without much attempt to do more than keep abreast of current requirements. While other African territories were already proudly accepting their independence, Bechuanaland managed to exist without a single political party until the 1960s.

But the bubbling eruption of African nationalism all over the continent has naturally been reflected in Bechuanaland. Today there are three political parties, though only two of them managed to secure representation in the Legislative Assembly at the country's first elections. Internal self-government was attained in March 1965, and independence is to follow in September 1966. The demand for education is insatiable. Efforts are being made to prod the economy into a more self-reliant condition. Enlightened methods in agriculture are beginning to take hold. A new capital has been raised in the bush at Gaberones to put an end to the anomalous situation of a capital at Mafeking, 16 miles outside the borders of the country. All these things are progressing at an exciting pace as I write.

By a stroke of disastrous bad luck, this transitional stage has had to compete with five years of severe shortage of rain, culminating in devastating drought. About a quarter of the country's cattle population of 1·3 million head has been lost; and food has had to be provided for the inhabitants, two-thirds of whom were facing destitution. Maize meal, dried skim milk and vegetable oil were delivered to the borders under the World Food Programme; from there on distribution was made by the Bechuanaland Government, with funds provided by the British Government.

Naturally these concerns have had to take priority over much else that would otherwise have been forging ahead, and in consequence planned progress has been slowed down in a number of fields.

The tour on which I have based most of this book was made in 1964. In spite of the difficulties, advances have been made since then which at their best can only be called spectacular. I have shown the country as I saw it, and at the same time indicated the changes likely to occur in the future.

* * *

Some comment is required on the spelling of Setswana names. Setswana is the language of the Batswana. The word Bechuana is the way Batswana was spelt by early European visitors to the country. It has also been written, as I. Schapera records in *The Tswana*, as Beetjuana, Booshuana, Bootchuana, Bichwana and Buchuana; I have written Batswana when referring to the people, Bechuana when referring to the land. A man of the Batswana is a Motswana. And on independence the country is to be called Botswana.

Setswana orthography seems to have grown up in a totally haphazard way, and even now if you compare official maps you may well find the names spelt differently. I have used the spellings that seem to have become accepted as standard, but they are full of inconsistencies.

The chief points to note are these.

The 'h' after a consonant, as in the name Letsholathebe, does not modify the preceding consonant; it represents an *aspirated* consonant. As it happens, aspirated consonants, pronounced, that is, with an expulsion of air, are easier for us to pronounce than unaspirated ones; as so often in the transliteration of African languages, an attempt to represent the pronunciation with complete fidelity is only confusing to anyone except a specialist. If the consonants are pronounced as in English there is not much likelihood of being misunderstood in most cases.

The intrusion of an Afrikaans element complicates things, however. 'G' often represents the South African 'g', equivalent to the Scottish or German 'ch'. Strictly speaking the Prime Minister of Bechuanaland should spell his name Kgama, and indeed this form of the name is sometimes seen. However, the family themselves spell it Khama, and I have done the same. This 'kg' sound

at the start of words is fairly common, e.g. in *kgotla*, the tribal council, or *kgosi*, chief. It is simply 'k-ch'.

Some odd conventions survive, such as the use of a semi-vowel 'o' to represent the sound of 'w'. Chief Bathoen of the Bangwaketse signs his name 'Bathoeñ'; it is pronounced Batweng.

In general the vowels are pronounced as in Italian, except that a long 'e', as in the names Sebēle or Molēfi, is often pronounced as in English. On the other hand it is often, as in Kwenā, pronounced as in Italian. Short of adopting a new system of orthography which involves spelling all the familiar names in an unfamiliar way, there seems to be no way out. More complex and no doubt more consistent orthographies do exist, but they involve writing this kind of thing:

Dikòbò tsáshèténó díselè

To use eleven diacriticals in a simple three-word sentence (it means 'the madman's blankets have been burnt') is going beyond all reasonable bounds.

* * *

I owe much gratitude to the officers of the Bechuanaland Government, from the former Queen's Commissioner, Sir Peter Fawcus, down, for their uncommon hospitality and helpfulness. My itinerary was ingeniously devised for me by Major Alan Donald, the Information Officer, and over most of it I was squired by Masukula Sinombe, my guide, philosopher and friend and a very solid performer at the wheel of a Land-Rover. I was flown to the less-accessible regions by Bob Mildenhall of Bechuanaland Safaris, Ltd., who constantly went out of his way to show me points of interest, and whose knowledge of the country goes a long way beyond its airstrips.

To all of these I tender my thanks, and also to those of their wives and children who helped to make my stay in Bechuanaland so very enjoyable.

B. A. YOUNG

READING LIST

I am particularly indebted to *The Bechuanaland Protectorate*, by A. Sillery (Oxford University Press, 1952).

I have also made use of:

Through the Kalahari Desert by G. A. Farini (Sampson Low, 1886)

The Lost World of the Kalahari by Laurens van der Post (Hogarth Press, 1958)

The Tswana by I. Schapera (International African Institute, 1953)

The Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes by I. Schapera (London School of Economics, 1952)

The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa by I. Schapera (George Routledge and Sons, 1930)

Livingstone's Private Journals ed. I. Schapera (Chatto and Windus, 1960)

Report to the Government of Bechuanaland on the Bushman Survey by G. B. Silberbauer (Gaberones, 1965)

The Harmless People by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (Secker and Warburg, 1959)

Ten Thousand Men of Africa by R. A. R. Bent (HMSO, 1952)

Report of a Mission to the Bechuanaland Protectorate to investigate the possibilities of economic development in the Western Kalahari (HMSO, 1954)

Report to the Government of the Bechuanaland Protectorate on the Beef, Cattle and Meat Industry by G. R. Purnell and W. S. Clayton (FAO, 1963)

FAO/IUCN Special Project: interim report on Bechuanaland by T. Riney and P. Hill (FAO, 1963)

Trypanosomiasis Control in Relation to Agriculture, Forestry, Veterinary and Other Activities in Bechuanaland by I. J. Lewis and E. Krog (WHO, 1962)

Report on the Review of Salaries and Conditions of Service of Teachers by G. H. Rusbridger and H. Weber (High Commission Territories, 1960)

Report on the Census of the Bechuanaland Protectorate 1964, 1965
Bechuanaland Protectorate Development Plan, 1963-68

I have also been plied with endless useful documents by the Information Department of the Bechuanaland Government.

I. THE BIRTH OF A NATION

BECHUANALAND – the ‘ch’ soft as in ‘church’ – came out of a hole in the ground near Pilane, in what is now the Bakgatla tribal territory. The footprints made by the first man and by the animals that followed him out are still to be seen, clearly printed in the rock.

Louwe and Matsieng, who were responsible for the creation of the world according to this particular myth, must presumably take the blame for the country’s physical shortcomings; but it is fair to say that as they created it the country was better organised. The dried-up water courses that cross the Kalahari desert were once limpid streams; the marshlands of Ngamiland were well-irrigated pastureland before the waters of the Okavango spilled from their bed and drowned them. The Nossop river on the west, the Molopo on the south, the Crocodile and Limpopo on the east, ran all the year round.

No doubt those founding gods have been busy elsewhere; otherwise one can be sure they would have noticed that the country was becoming desert at one end and swamp at the other. It is this inequitable distribution of natural resources that accounts for the sparseness of the population; on an area of roughly 220,000 square miles, a little bigger than France, Bechuanaland supports a population of just over half a million, a little less than Leeds.

In any case it was not the gods but the British Government who set the boundaries around the country. Bechuanaland’s present shape on the map was determined in 1895, Joseph Chamberlain being the Secretary of State for the Colonies. No mere African divinity, one feels, would have hit on the ingenious notion of providing the Protectorate with a capital 16 miles outside its own boundaries, an anomaly that persisted until 1965.

In the 1880s there were two Bechuanalands – the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland, later ceded to Cape Colony and now forming the northern part of Cape Province, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, established by proclamation in

BECHUANALAND

1885 to guard the native Africans against 'filibustering expeditions' by the Boers. The principal chiefs in the protected area were anxious to co-operate in its establishment, in spite of the abrupt manner in which General Sir Charles Warren used them. His interview with Chief Sechele of the Bakwena, for instance, began like this*:

WARREN: I have been desired by the Queen's Government to give you the following notification. The Queen's Government has established a protectorate over the part of Bechuanaland and the Kalahari west of the Transvaal, north of the Cape Colony, and westward towards Namaqualand.

SECHELE: Has the Chief (i.e. Warren) nothing more to tell us?

WARREN: No.

The year before this, there had been a *fracas* with some independently minded Boers who had, following the current fashion, set up a couple of private republics within the existing Bechuanaland boundaries – Stellaland, 30 miles north of Vryburg, and Goshen, on the Transvaal border south-east of Mafeking. One day the burghers of Goshen were returning from a cattle-raid on the Bangwaketse, and as they passed by Mafeking they were attacked by the local Barolong, who coveted the cattle themselves.

In the fight that followed, Christopher Bethell, Warren's representative with Chief Montshiwa of the Barolong, was killed; and soon after, the Goshen freebooters attacked Mafeking and hoisted their flag there. Warren restored order in a skilful campaign in which his troops did not have to fire a shot, chased the people of Goshen back into the Transvaal, negotiated the Protectorate with the chiefs, and finally drew up an ambitious scheme for the future administration of the Protectorate which he forwarded to the High Commissioner in Cape Town, and which the High Commissioner tore to shreds.

British Bechuanaland was proclaimed British territory in September 1885, its northern boundary being fixed at the Molopo river. This boundary was confirmed when, 10 years later, British Bechuanaland was ceded to Cape Colony. It ran actually along the Molopo as far as its junction with the Ramathlabama Spruit, then east along the Ramathlabama Spruit to

*Quoted by A. Sillery in *The Bechuanaland Protectorate*, p. 56 f.n.2.

the Transvaal frontier. No one at the time thought it particularly important that the Ramathlabama Spruit ran 16 miles north of Mafeking.

Two other historical events need to be touched on, both of which took place in 1895.

The first was the visit to London of three powerful Bechuana chiefs, Khama of the Bamangwato, Bathoen of the Bangwaketse and Sebele of the Bakwena. The chiefs were alarmed, and rightly, at the degree to which their country was being handed over to the British South Africa Company for administration. The company had been granted a charter in 1889 which gave them wide powers over the Protectorate, and in fact Rhodes made no secret of the fact that he intended to take it over. In a letter which he wrote to Lord Ripon in 1894, he said clearly that 'it was thoroughly understood that the Chartered Company would relieve Her Majesty's Government of the expense and responsibility of the Protectorate so soon as the Company had satisfied Her Majesty's Government that it was in a position to do so'.*

The chiefs had little time for the company. The company, they said – not, I feel, without reason – 'will take our land and sell it to others' and 'fill our country with liquor shops as they have Bulawayo'.†

Still, the government was committed to the company, and though the chiefs gained a number of points by their negotiations (and also had the honour of being received by Queen Victoria, who presented them with quasi-military dress uniforms still worn on ceremonial occasions), the company could look forward to administering all that part of the country not reserved for the tribes. However, in December 1895 occurred the second of these events, which demonstrated to the government that the company was not, after all, in a position where it could be trusted to run the territory. This was the ludicrous affair of the Jameson Raid.

Dr. Jameson was Resident Commissioner in the territories which had already been handed over to the company; his leadership of an armed raiding party in support of the Transvaal *uitlanders* against their legitimate government was about as bizarre as it would be today if the Governor of one colonial territory were to send a force to intervene in the political affairs of another colonial territory.

**ibid*, p. 66.

†*ibid*, pp. 69–70.

BECHUANALAND

Standards and sentiments were different then, and the affair did not seem quite so grotesque as it would today; but as it turned out the raid was an unqualified flop, and its undignified collapse at Doornkop meant also the end of the company's ambitions in the Protectorate. The cession of the lands in which Dr. Jameson had held his commission was cancelled, and the proposal for the company to administer all the other non-tribal land was never heard of again. These lands today form the Lobatsi, Gaberones and Tuli Blocks.

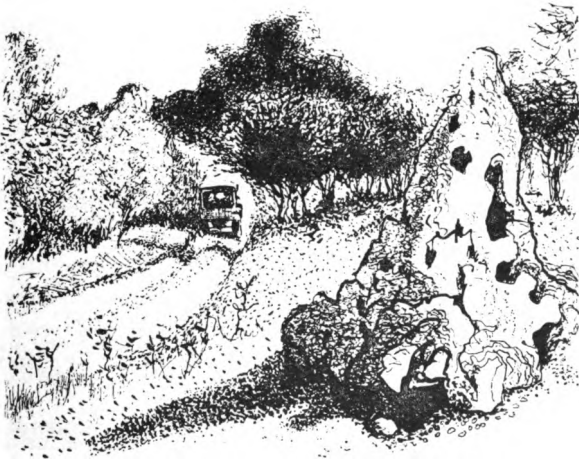
The year 1895 thus saw the beginning of the Protectorate as we know it now, complete with the anomalous situation of its capital. Another anomaly also resulted from the drawing of the territorial boundary through the middle of the country occupied by several of the tribes. This is a mishap that can take place wherever boundaries are drawn; but it means, for example, that the chief of the Barolong lives outside Bechuanaland, and that the chief of the Bakgatla has some of his lieges living in the Republic of South Africa, where they are subject to a different code of laws. In the circumstances the lack of difficulty to which this state of affairs has given rise is praiseworthy; if Hitler had been as amicable over the Sudeten Germans as Chief Kebalepile is about the Bechuanaland Barolong the world might have been saved a deal of conflict.

The generally friendly attitude of Bechuanaland's indigenous inhabitants towards the white men, in spite of all provocation, may be due to the fact that their first white visitors were missionaries with no empire-building aims and a message of peace and goodwill to all men. The London Missionary Society established a base at Kuruman, in British Bechuanaland, as early as 1818. Livingstone lived, worked and explored in what became the Protectorate for more than 10 years from 1841; he was the first white man to reach Lake Ngami and he discovered the Upper Zambesi at Shesheke, now on the border between Zambia and the Caprivi Strip. He is still spoken of with deep respect by the Batswana, and the London Missionary Society is still a strong influence in the country. Roughly 14 per cent of the population today is Christian. The rest are pagans.

Bechuanaland today is surrounded on four-fifths of its circumference by the Republic of South Africa, including South-West Africa and the Caprivi Strip. In the north-east there is a com-

BIRTH OF A NATION

mon frontier with Rhodesia, and at the extreme north-east tip, by the confluence of the Chobe and Zambesi rivers, there is a tiny connection with Zambia. In view of the uneasy relations between South Africa and some of the new African states, with whom naturally Bechuanaland is more or less aligned politically, this might suggest a situation of strain. In fact, the Bechuanaland Government and the South African Government are entirely realistic in their mutual relations; by far the greatest proportion of Bechuanaland's exports are bought by South Africa, and there are always several thousand Batswana working in the mines around Johannesburg. On the occasion of Bechuanaland's achievement of internal self-government, the South African Prime Minister sent the Prime Minister of Bechuanaland a friendly message.



Termite mound on a main road

2. THE POLITICAL PICTURE

BECHUANALAND achieved its present status of internal self-government in March 1965.*

During the previous year, a new and more accurate census of the population was made, voting registers prepared, and 31 constituencies delimited, from which members of the Legislative Assembly were to be elected on a basis of universal suffrage. To be included on the electoral roll, a voter must be a British subject or British protected person of 21 years old or more, who either has lived in Bechuanaland for 12 months previous to registration, or has been born there and domiciled there on the date of application for registration.

There is an elected Legislative Assembly and a House of Chiefs. The chiefs of the eight principal tribes of Bechuanaland are *ex officio* members of the House of Chiefs, together with four members elected from among their number by the sub-chiefs in the Chobe, Francistown, Ghanzi and Kgalagadi districts. The particular function of the House of Chiefs (which it is convenient to discuss here before going on to the main details of the constitution) is to safeguard the interests of the tribes and tribal organisations. The Legislative Assembly must refer to them a draft of any bill concerning the appointment of chiefs and African Authorities,† the organisation and administration of African courts, and tribal law and organisation. The House of Chiefs may then submit relevant resolutions to the Minister responsible for the bill, who must lay them before the legislature.

The House of Chiefs is also available for consultation by Ministers on any other matter. The Minister is then allowed to take part in the House of Chiefs' debate, though without voting.

*Bechuanaland is to become an independent sovereign republic, to be known as Botswana, on 30 September 1966. The republican constitution will provide for an executive President who will, however, be responsible to the legislature. In other respects the constitution will be based on the current constitution with the necessary adjustments to adapt it to the circumstances of independence. The Prime Minister will be the first President.

When the individual due by right of succession is too young, or otherwise unsuitable, to accede to the chieftainship, an African Authority, generally of chiefly family, is appointed until the real chief is ready to succeed.

THE POLITICAL PICTURE

Contrariwise, the House of Chiefs may put forward representations to the Prime Minister, or through him to any other Minister, when they feel that the interests of the tribes are involved.*

Government is exercised by the Cabinet, which consists of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and six other Ministers appointed from members of the Legislative Assembly. The Prime Minister is appointed by Her Majesty's Commissioner, and would normally be the leader of the majority party in the Legislative Assembly. Bechuanaland's first Prime Minister is Seretse Khama.

Power is still reserved to Her Majesty's Commissioner† in the fields of external affairs, defence and internal security. The appointment and control of officers in the public service was transferred to an executive Public Service Commission on 1 May 1966.

Besides the 31 elected members, the Legislative Assembly contains four specially elected members, chosen by the Assembly from a list presented to them by the Prime Minister and from any names put forward by members. The Attorney-General (who is a public officer) also sits, though without a vote.

Bechuanaland's first elections took place in the spring of 1965 and resulted in an overwhelming majority for the Bechuanaland Democratic Party (BDP), under the leadership of Seretse Khama, which secured 28 seats, with 123,757 votes. The next highest representation was that of the Bechuanaland People's Party (BPP), whose 19,964 votes secured them three seats. About 75 per cent of registered voters voted, and something like 80 per cent of those eligible registered.

The oldest of the active political parties is the Bechuanaland People's Party, though it bears little relation to the organisation, founded in 1960, from which it sprang. The original BPP was founded by Mr. K. T. Motsete, who claims that it was the first political party in the country, though it was in fact antedated by

*In the independence constitution the House of Chiefs will be brought into closer association with the Assembly and bills of the special class will have to be presented to the Assembly and then sent to the House of Chiefs for comment before the bill is proceeded with in the Assembly.

†The three British territories in southern Africa – Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland – were originally administered by a High Commissioner, a post held for convenience by Britain's senior representative in South Africa. In 1964 this post was abolished. The administration of Bechuanaland was then entrusted to Her Majesty's Commissioner (formerly the Resident Commissioner) who became directly responsible to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

the Bechuanaland Federal Party, no longer operative. Mr. Motsete wrote a manifesto for his party, *Unity and Harmony*, and prefaced it with a Latin motto, *Per angusta ad augusta* (through hardships to triumph). The manifesto was mild and peaceable, its main call being for brotherhood between all tribes and races, co-operation with the government and chiefs and 'all agencies working for the well-being and advancement of the people', freedom to organise socially and politically and, in the final paragraph, self-government and independence as soon as possible. He also drafted a constitution, which called for government by a House of Chiefs and a House of Commons.

Mr. Motsete took on as his chief lieutenant Mr. P. Matante, then working in Levin's store in Francistown. Unity and harmony were not part of Mr. Matante's programme, nor was he a man to remain for long in the office of Vice-President when the office of President was there for the taking. It was not long before Mr. Matante had taken over the BPP and given it a totally new and very much more radical programme. At the next meeting of the party, Mr. Motsete lost his seat on the National Executive.

Or so, at any rate, the current leaders of the BPP hold. Mr. Motsete regarded himself right up to the time of the election as the leader of the party. Few others seem to have done so, however; at Lobatsi, where he stood for election, he secured only 377 votes, and as he was the only candidate for his slice of the party it is not represented in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Matante's leadership of the BPP may therefore be regarded as definite; but during its formative period another section flaked off under the leadership of Mr. M. K. Mpho and set up under the name of the Botswana Independence Party. Its programme is not noticeably different from that of the BPP. The 6,491 votes cast for it at the election did not manage to secure a seat in the Legislative Assembly.

The BDP probably owes its overwhelming superiority to the leadership of Seretse Khama. It was formed to provide a platform for moderate thought as soon as it became evident that politics were beginning to matter in Bechuanaland. Seretse – as everyone calls him except Mr. Matante, who tends to speak of him as 'Mr. Seretse Khama' – is an able politician and a good speaker, and has the added advantage of being head of the

chiefly family of the Bamangwato, the biggest tribe in the country.

The circumstances in which Seretse Khama was debarred from succeeding to the chieftainship of his people are set out in Chapter 7. He has a comfortable European-style house on the outskirts of Serowe, the Bamangwato capital, but he stays mainly in Gaberones attending to the government of the country. He is a big, friendly man, who laughs easily and pleasantly. When Dr. Verwoerd sent him his congratulations on the result of the election he took the opportunity to disclose that the bar hitherto operating on his entry into the Republic – the result of his marriage to a European, which would be illegal there – was now lifted, ‘after it had become clear that, in spite of previous intentions, Bechuanaland had been placed on the road to independence, and after I had indicated on behalf of the Government that since this was in accordance with the policy of separate development, the Republic would desire friendly relations with such a neighbour State’.

Mr. Matante, whom I met during the opening stages of his election campaign, is very much more the professional politician. I found him sitting behind a table in a darkened room in one of the houses built by the Francistown Beer Hall Trust and wrestling with a telephone call to a friend in Lusaka, Zambia. Now and then he seemed on the point of success, but African courtesy compelled him to use each fleeting connection in conventional greeting. ‘Good morning!’ he roared. ‘I say GOOD MORNING! How ARE YOU?’ In the end he packed it all up in disgust. ‘The exchange in Bulawayo,’ he explained to me, ‘are interfering with the call so that they can get it all down on their tape.’

While he was fighting with the wire I looked round his office. There were two pictures of President Nkrumah on the wall, one of Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, one of the late Patrice Lumumba and one of President Nasser. On the desk were two small flags, divided laterally into black, green and yellow stripes, with a black five-pointed star in the middle. This was the flag he designated for independent Bechuanaland.

Mr. Matante gave me a copy of his party manifesto when he had been through it crossing out the word ‘Protectorate’ wherever it followed the word ‘Bechuanaland’. It was simple and non-controversial, though a great deal more radical than that of the BDP. It called for complete independence under an

African government not later than 1964 (though he was realistic enough to recognise that a victory for his party in the 1965 elections would be a satisfactory compromise). It required universal adult suffrage; freedom of speech, press, assembly and religion; the review of all boundaries created by 'colonialists in Africa'; Pan-Africanism, a Union of African States, positive neutrality and one common nationality for all Africans. When I asked him, he denied any sympathy with communism.

He believed that Bechuanaland should be able to balance its budget – a feat it had attempted to achieve since 1954 – by the exploitation of its mineral resources; until that was possible, it would rely on loans from other nations. Among the projects he would want a loan for was the building of a railway from Francistown to Maun. The District Commissioner at Francistown told me this would cost at least £4.5 million, but later estimates I heard went as high as £16 million.

I went to hear Mr. Matante address a meeting in Francistown's Freedom Square. In the front of his numerous audience were half a dozen curiously sinister figures, women in khaki shirts and ties, looking for all the world like African versions of the Bund Deutscher Mädchen. These were members of the BPP's political organisation, and when Mr. Matante made some cheerworthy point they threw up their arms into the air and cried 'Ai!', whereupon the rest of the crowd did so too.

Mr. Matante spoke persuasively with a deep voice and a ceaselessly gesturing left hand, the right being fettered to its essential function of holding the microphone. His theme was the importance of everyone's using the votes they were about to be granted, and he brought in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins to put it over.

I never succeeded in meeting Mr. M. K. Mpho, leader of the Botswana Independence Party, at this time. Various reports said that he was in Peking, in Moscow and in Dar es Salaam. I met three of his staff in Palapye, Mr. E. Mokobi, Mr. M. M. Tlale and Mr. K. E. Motshidisi. Their average age I would have assessed at about 23. I got a copy of their election manifesto too, and found it almost word for word the same as Mr. Matante's.

Seretse Khama's first government has inherited a frail economy on the one hand and a determined push to improve it on the other. The weakness of the economy is that almost 90 per

THE POLITICAL PICTURE

†cent of Bechuanaland's exports depend on the livestock industry, and this is peculiarly vulnerable both to drought and to foot-and-mouth disease. Exports of crops amount only to about 6 per cent of the total in a normal year, and minerals to about 4 per cent. Livestock, agriculture and other industries are dealt with in Chapters 10, 11 and 12 respectively.

In 1963 the country embarked on a five-year plan designed to get it on a cash rather than on a subsistence basis and to stimulate both existing and potential industries until it is possible to do without budgetary aid from the British Government. The plan has had to include the building of the new capital at Gaberones, since a capital outside the national boundaries was consistent neither with economy nor national pride. Social development has had to take second place in the priorities of the plan until some degree of economic viability has been obtained; but there is one vital exception to this, and that is the emphasis to be placed on education.

Funds for the plan come mainly from the British Government; besides considerable Colonial Development and Welfare grants there has been a grant of £828,688 specifically for the building of the new headquarters in Gaberones, and an Exchequer loan of £750,000. Grants have also been made by Oxfam (£270,019) and others, and loans by Barclays Bank and the Standard Bank. Bechuanaland herself contributed £350,000 obtained from the sale of Crown lands and £25,500 from the Cattle Export Levy Fund; the Post Office Savings Bank made a loan of £65,000 and the Teachers' Provident Fund one of £64,000.

It was hoped when the development plan was drawn up that by its completion in 1968 revenue would have been sufficiently stimulated to bring the prospect of a more prosperous and less risky financial future for the country, but the disastrous drought which began in 1965, following four or five years of below average rainfall, has clearly upset these plans.

I have given all the above sums in pounds sterling; but the currency unit of Bechuanaland is the South African Rand, worth 10s. and divided into 100 cents. The great majority of external trade is done with South Africa, and a customs agreement was negotiated in 1910, and is now being renegotiated. It excludes all tariffs between the two countries except on beer, wines and spirits imported into Bechuanaland from South Africa.

3. THE LINE OF RAIL

WHICHEVER way you enter Bechuanaland, your route will involve your having to declare your race. Come in through Rhodesia and you will be presented with a form that allows scope for the imagination in this respect: I wrote 'Caucasian' on mine and although the official to whom I handed it seemed mildly surprised, he had nothing to say. In South Africa you are guided more carefully through ethnic channels; there the form says 'Race (European, Hebrew, Asian, etc.)'.

Most of the population of Bechuanaland would come under 'etc.', i.e. they are indigenous Africans; but race is little regarded there.

Broadly speaking, Bechuanaland, like Gaul, may be divided into three parts – the fertile eastern region, through which the railway and the road run like a spinal cord; the arid desert of the Kalahari; and the well-watered, indeed too well-watered, lands in the north, much of which is swampland. The enormous majority of the population lives in the east, which is not only the best agricultural and grazing land, but has all the communications. From the Rhodesian border at Ramaquabane to the South African border at Ramathlabama, the road is a good all-weather highway, though the volatile brown dust of its surface involves endless activity in sealing off the interior of one's car from the plumes of smoke trailed by other vehicles encountered on the road. It follows fairly closely the same route as the railway, which is owned by Rhodesian Railways.

All the main centres of population and administration lie along the 'line of rail': reading from north to south, Francistown, Serowe, Palapye, Mahalapye, Gaberones, Kanye, Lobatsi (see map inside back cover). If you took a line due east from Molepolole to the border, then south from Molepolole, round Kanye, down to the South African frontier post at Ramathlabama and up the eastern border again to meet the first line, you would enclose in the 2,500 square miles or so thus marked off about 220,000 people, or almost half the population of the land.

THE LINE OF RAIL

From Francistown a road reaches westward to Maun, the administrative centre of Ngamiland in Bechuanaland's swampy north. It is a poor quality road at present. Roughly bulldozed out of the sand, it is suitable only for trucks, though intrepid car-owners make the trip from time to time. A loan of R2·5 million was negotiated with the International Development Association in 1963 for general road improvement, and some of this was allotted to the improvement of the Maun road to a fair all-weather standard.

Once long ago a railway line to Maun was seriously considered and a track was surveyed along a route north of the Makarikari pans – a vast tract of salt-pans lying some 60 miles west of Francistown – as far as Khama Khama. There is no special significance in Khama Khama. Livingstone went there in his 1851 journey and described it as 'a fine pool of rain water standing by the well'. At all events, when the survey got that far, they decided not to go any farther. The 'projected railway' shown in the Oxford Atlas, connecting Gobabis in South-West Africa with Livingstone in Zambia and Plumtree in Rhodesia, is no more than a chimera.

From Maun a road runs to Ghanzi in the extreme west of the country, and one north to Kasane at the northern tip. Both of them are of the same quality as the existing Maun–Francistown road. For anyone seeking more luxurious transportation, there was at the time of my visit an internal airline run by Bechuanaland Safaris, a subsidiary of South African National Airline Corporation.* It did a regular round trip from Lobatsi to Francistown, Maun and Ghanzi and was available for flights elsewhere if required. The fleet consisted then of two Piper Aztecs with space for five passengers and a crew of one.

There are no proper roads in the Kalahari, though there is a network of tracks, both surveyed and unsurveyed, which are motorable in good conditions. Roads of similar standard link the villages of Ngamiland and the northern areas.

A journey up the 'line of rail' must begin at Mafeking to be complete, for Mafeking, though the capital no longer, is a part of the history of Bechuanaland.

Mafeking is still laid out much as it was in the years at the end

*The service is now run by Bechuanaland National Airlines, a locally registered company which is a subsidiary of Autair.

of last century when the territory began to crystallise out of the jumble of warring tribes and rapacious freebooters that inhabited those parts. On the south side is the African location, where something over a hundred years ago the Barolong chief Montshiwa settled after being chased from his own lands by the Matabele. He called the place *Mafikeng*, which in Setswana means 'the place of stones', after the piled-boulder defences he raised there.

North of this is the Imperial Reserve, within which are the buildings that housed the Bechuanaland Government until the move to Gaberones. This is the 2,000-acre cantonment with which Captain (later General Sir Charles) Warren enclosed the two stone forts he built to guard against attack from the Transvaal.

Beyond this again is the modern town that was laid out by Warren for the traders who came flocking to this prosperous station after he had restored peace to the area. 'Laid out' is perhaps a flattering word to apply to the town plan. There is a main square in which are most of the shops (and Dixon's Hotel, which housed Baden-Powell's Mess during the siege), and a network of straight roads crossing one another at right angles. They are named after the senior officers of Warren's force – Warren, Shippard, Carrington, Robinson, Hatchard, Martin Streets.

The Union Jack still flew over the rearguard of the Bechuanaland Government's buildings at the time of writing. It flew too over the offices of the Native Recruiting Company across the road from the Imperial Reserve; and it still survived in the arms of the town. But to get to the nearest British territory you must travel 16 miles north to the frontier post at Ramathlabama.

The first town of any size that you come to inside Bechuanaland is Lobatsi; and a very pleasant town it is. The predominantly flat landscape here erupts into a rash of small but steep hills, and Lobatsi is so sited in a valley in their midst that whatever breeze there may be is funnelled over the town. Like most small colonial towns, it consists basically of one street, but Lobatsi's main street is given extra character by a right-angle bend in the middle of the town and a roundabout at one end, where the road to Zeerust meets the main road from Mafeking. (It also has those familiar signs that denote a 30 m.p.h. limit.) There are some very attractive modern buildings, notably the

post office, which stands on a bank a little height above the road on the outside of a curve, where it catches the eye very agreeably whichever way you approach it; and a well-designed block of shops and flats in the main street with the two ubiquitous banks, Barclays and Standard, at either end. Before the transfer of the government to Gaberones, the Legislative Council met in an elegant courthouse just outside Lobatsi; but in a curious way the most interesting building in the town at the moment is the Cumberland Hotel.

The Cumberland, with its big, airy rooms and impeccable service, would get four stars in any AA guidebook. There are private bathrooms to all the bedrooms, the public rooms are air-conditioned, the staff (mostly imported from Rhodesia, where luxury hotels are more firmly established) attentive. Although I never saw it so much as half full, it is clearly designed with an eye to the future. When Gaberones becomes the London of Bechuanaland, Lobatsi will be its Manchester, with the unchallengeable prosperity that is bound to adhere to it from the presence there of the abattoir. The abattoir, which is more fully dealt with in Chapter 10, is the most abiding source of wealth in the country, since it copes with almost the whole of the export trade in beef on which Bechuanaland so much depends.

North from Lobatsi the road runs through well settled land that has what is for this part of Africa a populous look, with well-kept wire fences and signs directing you to this or that undertaking. The hills soon peter out, and the landscape becomes flat and uninteresting. There is little to look at in the 40-odd miles of motoring that takes you to Gaberones; you pass two secondary schools, Moeding College at Ootsi on the right hand side, and St. Joseph's on the left at Khale. Away to the right opposite St. Joseph's is the new dam that has been built to serve Gaberones, but it can't be seen from the main road.

Gaberones itself, sprouting like a social mushroom from the bush, is dealt with in Chapter 6. It is as well to stop there for refreshment and relaxation, for beyond it the road runs featureless and dull for 120 miles before it reaches the next town, Mahalapye; and though it contains two hotels, one of which puts on open-air cinema shows from time to time, Mahalapye exists for convenience rather than pleasure. It is an administrative centre, it houses the Agricultural Department's training

centre, and it is a railhead for the farmers of the Tuli Block. The Tuli Block, farmed mostly by European settlers at present, extends along the west bank of the Limpopo, otherwise called the Crocodile, river, for some 200 miles. It contains some of the best farmland in the country.

Palapye, the next town on the road, has much the same aspect as Mahalapye to the outside visitor. The Bamangwato once had their capital at Palapye, but not on the site of the present town. They lived some 10 miles to the east; the place is called Old Palapye on the maps now, and Palapye, Palapye Road. Present-day Palapye fulfils similar functions to Mahalapye, except that it is the point at which the road branches off to the increasingly important town of Serowe. This was one of the roads scheduled to be brought up to good all-weather standard out of the loan from the International Development Association.

The town of Serowe is described later on in Chapter 7 (pp. 61-63), where I deal with the Bamangwato, whose capital it now is.

It is close on another 100 miles to Francistown. The country through which you travel is hardly African scenery at its most dramatic. The road runs, with a minimum of curves, between uninterrupted stretches of low trees and bush in an assortment of the less stimulating shades of green. There is seldom any game to be seen, for in spite of the deserted look of the land this is actually a thickly populated area and the game is kept out for sound domestic reasons. On the other hand there are innumerable herds of African cattle grazing under the eye of their young boy keepers, and one has to keep a sharp eye on them. They have developed a liking for sleeping on the road, and when the light begins to fade in the evening they blend uncomfortably closely with its surface and form a considerable hazard to traffic. Sheep, goats and the occasional donkey turn up from time to time.

A little south of Francistown, at the top of a rocky slope at the side of the road, is a low wall of flat stones. This is one of a number of ruins of this kind to be found in the north-eastern part of the country. They are estimated to date from the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and it is thought that some of the pottery found in and around them may belong to an earlier culture still, of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Archaeologists find these sites of great interest, but mostly they are very hard to get at. These ruins at Seruli, only a hundred yards off the road, are the

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most accessible for the visitor. They consist of a single wall with a right-angle bend in it, sited as if to serve as a fortification against anyone attacking the hill. It is built of large flat stones without mortar, and before it began to suffer the ravages of time was beautifully neat and rectangular in construction. (The familiar pictures of the Zimbabwe ruins in Rhodesia give an idea of the look of the thing.)

Some of the other ruins in the district are more extensive, and show that the layout originally consisted of an enclosed area of huts surrounded by a wall. The hut sites are indicated by rings of stones set on edge, and there are circular grain-bin foundations of flat stones. In 1957 an inspector from the Commission for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Monuments and Relics paid a visit to the area and made a preliminary report in which he spoke with some excitement of the prospect of archaeological exploration in Bechuanaland; but unfortunately little further work has been done. However, the location of several sites – almost all of them inaccessible to the ordinary sightseer – have been recorded.

Rock paintings are also to be found in this area; indeed nearly every kopje (small hill) in the Tati district is said to boast some. In the report I have just referred to, a detailed description is given of paintings at Kalakamati which can be reached by car. They are inside a shelter formed by two large rocks, and their main feature is of two giraffes in dark red, one of them outlined in white. There are also an elephant and some buck and other figures, some of them in red and some in yellow ochre. Kalakamati is about 60 miles out of Francistown on the road north.

Francistown, though it has houses only on one side of its main street (the railway runs along the other) has a look of urban prosperity. The street is metalled – half a mile of courtesy to King George VI, in honour of whose passing by train the surface was laid. Residential streets, more conventionally dusty, lie behind the shops, while across the railway is the area where the Africans tend to live as separately as if they were a few miles east, over the border in Rhodesia.

What no doubt gives Francistown its colonial look is its thralldom to the Tati Concession.

Gold was discovered near the Tati river in 1866. At that time the Tati district, lying between the Shashi river and the Rama-

quabane – the present frontier – was disputed between the Matabele and the Bamangwato. The first visible concession was granted by Lobengula, chief of the Matabele, to a firm called the London and Limpopo Company; but the first fine careless rapture over gold died out when easier money seemed available in the diamond fields of Kimberley, and in the end this concession was abandoned.

In 1880, Lobengula granted a concession to the Northern Light Company, and in 1888 he confirmed this in favour of their successors, the Tati Concession Mining and Exploration Company, together with the right to all the grazing and timber and the privileges of excluding squatters. Trouble not unnaturally arose when the question was debated whether Lobengula had really any right in the territory at all; however, after protracted argument, the Imperial Government confirmed the Tati Company in its rights by Order-in-Council in 1911. They made only one condition, that a strip of country should be allocated as an African reserve, for which it was agreed an annual rent of £1,000 should be paid.

Unfortunately the gold that was to found the fortunes of the Tati Company ran out. I got Mr. Sinombe, my escort, to drive me to the Monarch Mine, just outside the town, which is supposed to be the oldest European-worked goldmine in Africa. It is deserted and stark, though there is still barbed wire to keep the visitors away.

‘The mine is no longer viable,’ Mr. Sinombe told me in one of the currently fashionable phrases.

Finally the original concessionaires sold out to a South African property company, Glazer Brothers, who run the territory purely as a commercial enterprise. This undoubtedly involves conflict with the township authority, and through them with the government, whose objects are rather different. The company is not particularly concerned with providing any buckshee welfare facilities; it has built a ‘location’, Tati Town, but the provision of schools is left to the government and the missions. It has also built a beer hall, which might be considered to come under the heading of welfare if it didn’t happen to have cut straight across an existing welfare undertaking.

Under the old company, the beer hall was managed by a Beer Hall Trust consisting of three trustees who included the District

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Commissioner, *ex officio*. All profits from the beer hall were used for African welfare, and as they amounted to something like R1,000 a month this was a very welcome source of revenue. From it the Trust had built a row of 36 pairs of semi-detached houses for African occupation, classrooms for the school, a community centre, and so on.

The new company's beer hall was designed to make a profit for the company, not for the community, and the Beer Hall Trust's income dropped to a mere R144 a month, obtained from the rent of the 72 houses. Now, however, the position of the new beer hall is itself threatened, as the government has passed legislation permitting the home brewing of beer subject to a levy of 2 cents per gallon. The revenue obtained from this levy is being used to provide additional water supplies for the town, at a cost of R20,000.

A board outside the town advertising building sites for sale claims that water and electric power are unrestricted. This is in fact misleading; the township has considerable problems over both. Both services were taken over from the company by the government in 1962, and leased to the township. Now a new power station and a high-tension reticulation system are to be provided, for which a loan of R120,000 is to be raised.

The remaining lands of the Tati Concession are now mostly given up to farming by settlers, on the whole with much success. Cotton is doing well there, and one farmer told me that he was having very encouraging results with lucerne, which he said would grow well anywhere it could get water. The recent appalling droughts underline the importance of raising fodder for storage when the natural grazing fails.

Francistown is sufficiently urbanised to have a constant simmer of petty crime. When the levy on home-brewed beer was first imposed (it was initially fixed at 5 cents a gallon, not 2) there were riots in the town. The then District Commissioner ingeniously profited by this to build nine new classrooms for the Tati Town school with convict labour.

The riots had another beneficial result in that they enabled the District Commissioner to press for higher priorities in the provision of the new welfare centre, the Leseding Welfare Centre, including a library. Francistown is better provided with the local equivalent of bright lights than most of Bechuanaland.

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If there is nothing doing at the welfare centre or the Mopane Club you may be attracted by the subtly Africanised beat-groups:

Concert

CHA CHA CHA

*by the Kamanga Brothers
from the Congo*

Rumba, Cha Cha Cha, Twist,
Rock and Roll, Marabi, Blues,
Jazz, etc.

The Mopane Club is one of Francistown's two clubs. It was inaugurated by Mr. Philip Steenkamp, the energetic District Commissioner there, in 1964. It is housed in a plain village-hall sort of building, with a bar, erected on the only piece of ground Mr. Steenkamp could get without paying for it. This is unfortunately rather far from Tati Town; for the Mopane was the first totally non-racial club in Francistown. There is an entrance fee of R2 and an annual subscription of R2, and it provides dances, Bingo and all the usual entertainments and just about pays its way. I went there one evening with Mr. Sinombe and a friend of his. A three-piece band (piano, saxophone and drums) was playing some conventional jazz, though it was too early in the evening for anyone to be dancing. There were a handful of people in the bar, mostly European, and – just as we left, unfortunately – a bevy of African girls came in and sat shyly along the wall waiting to be asked to dance. The club is in its way a landmark in social development.

The other club in Francistown is the Francistown Club, originally reserved for European members only. The atmosphere there is a good deal more patrician, with tennis courts and a bowling green, and wealthy local farmers' families gossiping over their cold drinks.

There is a certain amount of unemployment in Francistown, owing to the constant influx of squatters from the outlying regions; it was the only place in Bechuanaland where I ever found children coming up to me and saying 'You give me

penny, baas' – the children in the tribal areas being at the same time too shy and too unsophisticated. Francistown also suffers from a refugee problem.

There was formerly a resident representative of Amnesty International in the town to cope with refugees. This has sometimes caused a certain resentment among the more conservative elements of what is by and large the most conservative town in Bechuanaland; indeed there have been occasional overt anti-refugee acts such as the destruction, by some person or persons unknown, of an aeroplane standing on the airfield waiting to fly out some African Nationalist supporters ('It was a real professional job,' the airfield Security Officer assured me).

The Amnesty International representative analysed the problem for me. 'We can divide the refugees into three streams,' he said, 'the freedom fighters, the seekers after higher education, and the plain sick of it all.' It was not his business to probe their motives, but to see that such refugees as he had on his hands were given as good treatment as possible. Some of the refugees coming into Bechuanaland are not all they claim to be, there is no doubt about that; but as the Queen's Commissioner said to me later on, it is better that a few undesirables should be better treated than they deserved than that the deserving majority should receive less humane treatment than common humanity demanded.

There is a refugees' collecting centre in Francistown, known locally as the White House, where refugees are marshalled prior to onward transmission, usually to Zambia by way of the 'Freedom Ferry' at Kazungula, at the north-eastern tip of the country (see p. 26). In 1964, a new collection centre under construction was blown up. The saboteurs were never discovered, though there were the usual reports of a car being driven at high speed towards the South African border – reports that need not be taken too seriously, since the nearest point on the South African border is some 130 miles off as the crow flies.

There is also a radio station, erected at the time of the illegal declaration of independence in Rhodesia to broadcast uncensored news and views to the Rhodesians. The fear of sabotage lay over this too, and a British Army garrison was introduced in its early days to guard against action from over the border a dozen miles away.

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Francistown's principal importance is as a trading centre, and as the junction on the 'line of rail' with the road to Maun and Ngamiland. Its activities also include a bonemeal factory and a creamery; and, a few miles outside the town at Shashi, a tannery. These are dealt with in the chapter on the livestock industry (Chapter 10), from which they all indirectly spring.



4. NGAMILAND AND GHANZI

THE airfield at Francistown is owned by Wenela Ltd. (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association), whose flying is largely concerned with the transport of labour from Bechuanaland to the mines about Johannesburg and back. The little Piper Aztecs of Bechuanaland Safaris, cruising at 170 m.p.h. or so, did the trip to Maun in about an hour and a half, a saving of probably eight hours compared with the journey by road.

The route crosses the southern edge of the Makarikari pan, an enormous dry salt-pan, 80 miles across at its widest point. The waters of the Botletle river empty into it during the flood periods, leaving it dotted with shallow pools of water. There is a theory that at one time the whole of this part of Bechuanaland was under an enormous lake; but there is little enough water remaining there now, and what is there is seasonal. Even the water obtained from boreholes is mostly salty.

From the air you pick up the Botletle river soon after the last of the salt-pan recedes into the distance. It is enormously refreshing to see real water flowing freely between green banks; even in the most fertile areas along the line of rail one is inclined to think of water as a luxury to be conserved in dams or conjured through boreholes.

Livingstone, who came this way on his journey north in 1851, when he discovered the Upper Zambesi at Shesheke, knew the Botletle as the Zouga. He crossed it in May: 'The bed was stony', he reports in his journal, 'and there were small dykes of stones in it which are used for catching fish.' On the southward journey the following August he followed its tributary the Thamalakane almost as far as Maun, then turned east to join the Botletle again, which he crossed a little above Makalamabedi by 'a very good ford', probably at Chanokha Drift. He then went down the south bank as far as Lake Dow, which he called Lake Kumadow, from *kuma*, the papyrus plant that grows in it strongly enough to bear a man's weight, and *dau*, a local Bushman word for a track.

The aeroplane follows this route in the reverse direction as far as Maun. Maun is the administrative centre for the Ngami-land district. The plenitude of water removes some of the difficulties endemic in other parts of the country (except when the Thamalakane overflows its banks), but there are others from which the districts blessed by road and rail communications do not suffer.

As everywhere else, school buildings are inadequate for the education explosion; but at Maun there are no handy materials for extemporisation, and the nearest contractor is at Francistown. Moreover there is a crippling lack of skilled labour for any work that has to be done. The high cost of everything means that the tribal administration tends always to be in debt.

There is in any case no overriding tribal solidarity to back up the administration at Maun as there is in other places. As detailed in Chapter 9, the Batawana, who are the dominant tribe there, are actually a minority, the Bayei being almost twice as numerous; and to make things even more complicated there is a certain political difference between the two tribes, the Batawana being on the whole inclined towards the Bechuanaland Democratic Party, Seretse Khama being in a way a relation of theirs, while the Bayei show a partiality towards the Botswana Independence Party.

An additional difference arises from the presence of the Damara and the primitive Mbukushu who inhabit the upper reaches of the Okavango swamps; and there are several thousand Masarwa (Bushmen) and fragmentary splinters of half a dozen other tribes to be taken into account as well.

Maun is, however, a green and pleasant town for the visitor, with a comfortable hotel. The bar there was the most obviously multi-racial I saw anywhere. There always seemed to be a tendency in the other bars I visited for the Europeans to gather at one end and the Africans at the other; or, if there were two bars, for the Africans to use one and the Europeans the other. This is of course a financial phenomenon as well as a racial one; in England there are people who will gravitate naturally to the public bar, and others who feel most at home in the saloon. But at the long bar of the Maun hotel the races mix quite indiscriminately and quite unselfconsciously. The only difference I noticed was that the indigenous Africans tend to drink their beer

from bottles and the Europeans from glasses.

One compensation available to the District Commissioner at Maun is responsibility for the Chobe Game Reserve, which the government is developing as a tourist attraction. The entrance point for the reserve is at Kasane, at the junction of the Chobe and Zambesi rivers. There is an excellent hotel here, but it is accessible by road only via Zambia (nearest station Livingstone) unless one is prepared for a totally untourist standard of discomfort in one's travel. It is described in Chapter 12.

The country between Maun and Kasane was once well watered but is steadily drying up. North-east of Maun is a feature called the Mababe Depression, a 30-mile-long concavity that even at the beginning of this century was adequately watered, but is so no longer. When Livingstone passed that way the area was well populated; but the last tribe to live there, the Subia, only stayed a short time and departed in 1902.

North of here, beyond a range of low hills, the country becomes increasingly wet. The Chobe, or Linyanti, river (rivers in these parts commonly seem to acquire alternative names, according to the point at which geographers encounter them) runs eastward along Bechuanaland's northern border; beyond it, it broadens out into swamps that terminate in Lake Liambezi at the eastern end. The Chobe then becomes rather more tractable until it meets the Zambesi between Kasane and Kazungula.

On the other side of the Chobe is the Caprivi Strip, or Tassel (*Ziŋpfel*) as the Germans more descriptively called it when it was ceded to them. This rather pointless geographical notion formed half of what the Germans got for relinquishing their claims to Zanzibar. The other half was Heligoland. Britain does not seem now to have done very well out of the exchange, even though the Germans were disappointed in the primary object of the Caprivi Tassel, which was to give them access from German South-West Africa to the navigable waters of the Zambesi. The waters of the Zambesi do not happen to be navigable. Count von Caprivi de Caprera de Montecuccoli, to give him his full resonant title, was pretty unpopular with his countrymen over the transaction, and lost his job as Chancellor a year or so later.

The Caprivi Strip has been administered since 1929 by South-West Africa, which is to say by the Republic of South Africa. Between 1922 and 1929 it was entrusted to the Bechuanaland

Government – geographically, ethnologically and politically a position rather less bizarre than the current one.

At the eastern end of the Caprivi Strip, Bechuanaland has a pinpoint common frontier with Zambia, and it is here that the so-called Freedom Ferry carries political refugees across the Zambesi to a less circumscribed world. If the Rhodesians on one side or the South Africans on the other wanted to stop the ferry's operations they could do so in a minute. As long as it is open, however, it provides a useful exit for people who are politically unwelcome in either of those countries. The Freedom Ferry is in fact no more than a simple pontoon that crosses the Zambesi at Kazungula; there is nothing very romantic about it, no really dramatic quality despite its dramatic name.

To the west of Maun lie Lake Ngami and the extensive swamps of Ngamiland. The swamps are fed by the waters of the Okavango river, which rises in Angola and flows south-eastward until, its channel choked with reeds, it spills its contents broadcast over the land. Lake Ngami also has become no more than a swamp.

The waters of Ngamiland are full of fish, notably the succulent *tilapia* (the gastronomically renowned Chobe bream), whose potential is not as yet fully exploited. An interesting scheme has lately been investigated at Maun by Dr. Alexander Maar, the FAO's Regional Adviser on Fisheries. Dr. Maar was formerly Chief Fisheries Officer of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, where he had gone from his native Sweden. (Bechuanaland seems to exert an insatiable attraction on Scandinavians. Besides Dr. Maar I encountered Hans Jensen doing tsetse fly control at Maun, where also there was Eric Krog, the Veterinary Officer; and later I met Mr. I. J. Titlestad at Lobatsi, an energetic Norwegian who was Agricultural Officer in one of the most promising agricultural areas in the territory.)

Dr. Maar reckoned that there were 30–35 million fish in the Ngamiland waters that might be taken out and used for food. A pilot scheme on the Botletle had produced 700 pounds of fish between 4 o'clock one afternoon and 7 o'clock the following morning.

'I am convinced', Dr. Maar said in an interview in the *Daily Mail* in February 1964, 'that a minimum of 25 million pounds of nourishing fish could be taken inexpensively from this great swamp every year without having the least effect on its future

production. Per acre of water this represents 500 pounds of fish per year.

‘Contrast this with the country’s beef production – each head of cattle needs 40 acres to graze and 10 years to live, so only two-and-a-half pounds of meat can be produced per acre per year.’

The difficulty was that although the riverine tribes were content to eat fish, which they had always eaten anyway, it was a hard job to persuade the other tribes that fish was a useful addition to their diet. Difficulties of transport would in any case confine the market in fresh fish to the areas immediately around the water; the rest would have to be frozen or tinned, which would involve sinking a good deal of capital in equipment. It was hoped that a grant from Oxfam might be made available for this purpose.

The local fish are principally barbel, tigerfish and *tilapia* (bream). They and the crocodiles live in a state of uneasy equilibrium. Crocodiles eat barbel and tigerfish, but cannot catch bream. Tigerfish, on the other hand, can and do catch bream, but not barbel, which take refuge in the mud. While the crocodiles are plentiful, therefore, barbel and tigerfish are kept down, and bream flourish.

But the shooting of crocodiles for their skins is a local industry. As their numbers drop, barbel and tigerfish increase, but the tigerfish then eat up the bream. Europeans enjoy fishing for bream as well as eating them; Africans, however, can catch barbel more easily than they can bream, and enjoy them to eat. So in order to produce more food for the indigenous population it is necessary to keep the crocodiles down, whereas in order to attract tourists and wealthy fishermen it is preferable that they should be preserved.

In fact, restrictions on the shooting of crocodiles would affect only a small number of people directly; the market in crocodile skins does not bring in a great deal of revenue either to the government or the tribes, and a certain amount of shooting will always be necessary in order to ensure that unholy balance of nature beneath the waters of the Ngamiland swamps.

South-west from Lake Ngami, on the western edge of the country, lies Ghanzi, the problem child of an early pioneering venture. From the air, you can only tell when you are getting

close to the Ghanzi farms because vast straight fences cut across the green of the desert, which appears in all other respects to be the same as that from which the Bushmen wrest their toilsome living.

Ghanzi today is a small, isolated township with a stirring history and a dubious future. Its best feature is the fine twin-carriageway road extending for a couple of hundred yards past the government offices. The road is a pious pledge of faith in the future of the community, for at present the traffic is so meagre that both the carriageways are two-way. There are a handful of stores, a hotel, a church, and a well-built secondary school that was empty of pupils at the time of my visit because the government had decreed that it was to be racially integrated and the European population of Ghanzi, being mostly Afrikaans in origin, weren't having any and sent their children away to the Republic or to South-West Africa where they could acquire all-white educations and South African accents.

The Ghanzi settlement originated in the fears of Cecil Rhodes that the Germans might expand eastwards from what was then German South-West Africa. Rhodes promised land in the Ghanzi district, south of Ngamiland and east of the German border, to a number of Boer farmers from the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape Colony. At the beginning of 1895 they were assembled at the Marietsane river, 20 miles south of the Molopo, while an officer of the Bechuanaland Border Police went ahead with a reconnaissance party to see what kind of a country it was they were going to.

Unfortunately this was the year of the Jameson Raid, the year in which Rhodes' promises to Bechuanaland settlers ceased to have very much meaning. However, the Imperial Government had not the heart to turn back men who had come so far on their way, and who were willing to open up a brand new tract of country without either stock or capital to sustain them. A special commissioner was sent to Ghanzi to apportion the farms among the trekkers, who, after a heartbreaking journey through the almost waterless country, arrived there in the winter of 1898.

Thirty-seven farms were allotted, and much of the land in the district is still in the hands of the original settlers and their descendants. There was a minor complication involved in their settling there, for Chief Sekgoma of the Batawana reckoned that

the country was his. When he had been assured, however, that he would be allotted a reserve of his own, like Khama, Bathoen and Sebele, and that this would comprise all the land already occupied by his tribe, he gave up his claim and the great 'thirstland trek' was allowed to go on.

The land proved reasonably suitable for ranching; but the community cannot be said to be without its problems today. Their remoteness from the main centres of trade and communication is a crippling handicap. The difficulties it imposes on their contribution to the livestock industry are examined in Chapter 10 (p. 85).

The Ghanzi farmers' lands are now being properly surveyed and their titles regularised; and new settlers are being encouraged to buy land there at what is considered the competitive price of 75 cents per morgen. (One morgen is about 2.11 acres.)

Unfortunately, even if ranching in Ghanzi were a goldmine, which it isn't, the problems of living there are by no means negligible. Crops cannot be grown in the district; the soil is poor and the annual rainfall averages no more than 10 inches. So all food has to be brought in by lorry along the desert road or imported from South-West Africa. In either case it is expensive. So is petrol. An outbreak of foot-and-mouth, preventing any movement of cattle, can at one stroke dry up every source of income for the district. Already farmers there have to eke out their livelihood with the sale of dairy produce to the detriment of their stock, whose calves are deprived of cream.

None the less, there is still a viable community in the Ghanzi farms, and if the scheme for buying land is supported it might well become a model multi-racial community; though this will require some determined co-operation by the present residents, who come mostly of Afrikaans stock. However, as long ago as 1952, when a mission was appointed by the High Commissioner to investigate the economic possibilities of the western Kalahari, stress was laid on the necessity to instal African and European farmers side by side under identical conditions – with the rider that in that case the Africans would have to suffer identical conditions of taxation!

Ghanzi has some interesting characters among its society. At the District Commissioner's house I lunched with two brothers called Ramsden. The younger of them is in his late 70s and has

been in Bechuanaland for about 30 years. The elder, his senior by about a decade, has been there since 1899. He was a trader in the Bamangwato country, and knew the great Khama. His memory is excellent, his mind as clear as a bell, and his stories of life in those times would make a book.

The younger Ramsden gave me two souvenirs – a little circlet of Bushman ostrich-egg beads, made to go round the head but a good deal too small to go round mine; and a Bushman 'love-bow'. These love-bows are tiny models, about 10 inches across, and equipped with a quiverful of miniature arrows seven or eight inches long. They are said to be used in a ritual dance in which the men dance around the women until they see one they would like to make love to; then they shoot one of the little arrows into her backside. This account, picturesque as it is, hardly seems to fit in with what I was told elsewhere about the amatory habits of the Bushmen; but whatever its use, the love-bow is a sweet piece of work.

Not all the older inhabitants of Ghanzi are so devoted to the country. While I was talking in his shop to Mr. R. Vize, then the local member of the Legislative Council, a little grey-moustached Afrikaaner came in and chatted to him in Afrikaans. 'He is a wealthy man', Mr. Vize told me when he had gone. 'Fifty years ago he walked here, a thousand miles. Now none of his sons is interested in staying, so he is going to sell up and go back to the Republic.'

Ghanzi, with its common border with South-West Africa virtually unpatrolled, naturally has its refugee problem. There were no fewer than 145 detained at Makunda, a little way along the frontier, when I was there. They were typical of their kind; they claimed to have come 'in search of further education', but as their average age appeared to be in the middle 40s, and their elementary education to be of a fairly low level, this was hardly convincing. While their case was being considered, the District Commissioner offered them temporary residential permits on condition they did not go more than 12 miles from Makunda. The man who had constituted himself their leader declined to accept this courteous offer. Still, as the District Commissioner commented, this made no difference at all, for they would not be allowed to go more than 12 miles from Makunda, permit or no permit.

There was in fact a man from some interested organisation present in Ghanzi who said that if suitable permits could be given them, he would arrange a truck to take them to Kazungula and the Freedom Ferry. The District Commissioner explained to him that Zambia was not Cloudeuckooland but a responsible self-governing state, and its government had intimated that these particular refugees would not be welcome. This left the refugees where they were, at the centre of a 12-mile radius around Makunda, until they decided to go back where they came from. Until this happened they were welcome to stay. This is the kind of problem that arises in Bechuanaland wherever the frontier is reasonably open, and which it has always dealt with patiently and liberally.

A drive round the sights of Ghanzi town takes about 10 minutes. The two arms of the government most concerned with local life are the Veterinary Department and the Police. There is a handful of stores (two of them owned by Mr. Vize). There is the empty school standing like a reproach to the parents of the community; the post office; the hotel. The hotel is small but friendly. It does good business with the locals, being, after all, the only form of relaxation the town provides.

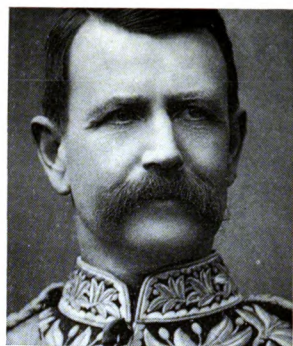
5. THE KALAHARI DESERT

THE sands of the Kalahari, known by repute to all film-goers, are less dramatic in fact than they are in legend, being for the most part overgrown thickly with grass and scrub, which in the dried-up river-beds that cross the area occasionally achieve the status of miniature forests. Only in the southern part of the desert do traditionally desert-like conditions appear, with bare sandy dunes. From the air it is hard to tell when you have left the occupied lands and begun to fly over the desert; the green mat of shrubbery is continuous, except where a pencilled squiggle marks the course of a dried-up river that occasionally expands into a flat salt-pan.

The pans will hold a little water after the rains, sometimes for as long as two months. This is the only surface-water to be found in the Kalahari, and when it comes it attracts great numbers of wild game. The Kalahari is in fact fairly full of game at all times, and the trees and shrubs attract many birds. At certain seasons of the year, too, there are wild flowers in astonishing profusion.

The Kalahari also supports a population of something like 10,000 Bushmen. The exact figure is not known, and the bashful and elusive ways of the Bushmen kept them from being counted along with the rest of Bechuanaland's people in the 1964 census. They are a diminutive race, yellow of skin under their sunburn, with a definite Mongolian cast of countenance. When they are born, Bushmen children have a dark brown patch at the base of the spine that is known as the Mongolian spot; this disappears as they grow up. The origin of the race is not known; 'of the peoples of South Africa of whom there is any definite historical record', says Schapera in *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa* (p. 26), 'the Bushmen are certainly the oldest'; but he believes them to have come originally from East Africa, possibly from as far north as Ethiopia. From this region they were driven south by more powerful Negro tribes; but just how long they have lived in their present home it is not possible to say.

The Bushmen are a difficult problem administratively, for



Above: Sir Charles Warren, negotiator of British protection in the 1880s. *Left:* Queen Victoria presenting her portrait to the Batswana chiefs who visited her in 1895. They were, *below* (left to right), Chief Sebele of the Bakwena, Chief Bathoen of the Bangwaketse and Chief Khama of the Bamangwato, with the Reverend W. C. Willoughby who accompanied them.





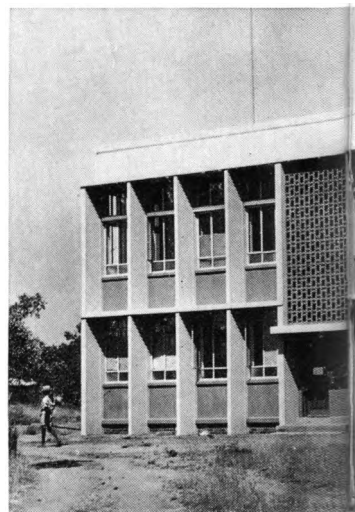
Above: people come from many miles around by foot, horse, bicycle and waggon to attend a *kgotla* (tribal council) like this one at Mochudi. *Below:* a herd of impala in the Chobe Game Reserve which contains a superb variety of wild animals and a great diversity of birds.



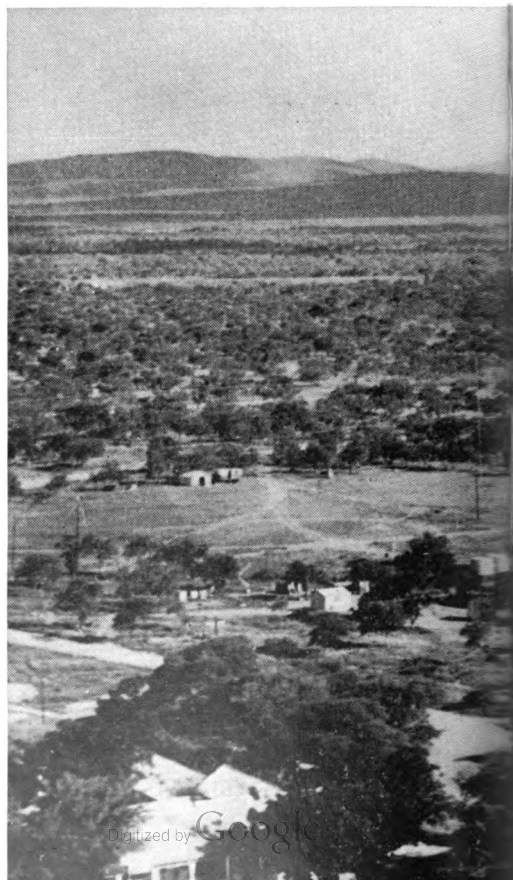


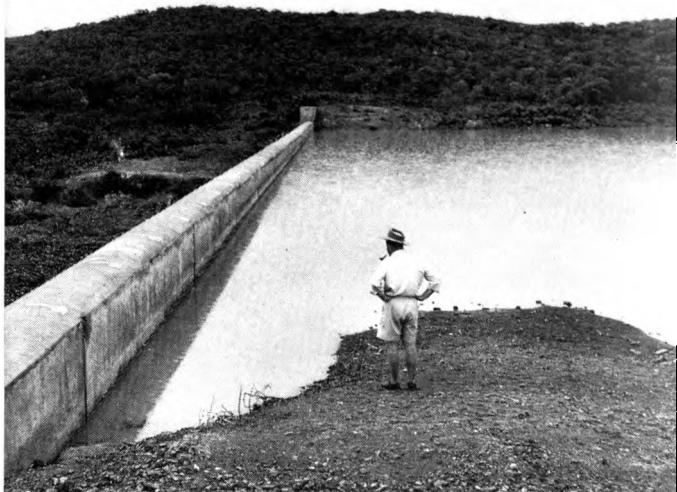
Above: waiting for a train at Francistown, on the line linking Bechuana-land with South Africa and Rhodesia. Roads are being extended with the aid of a loan from the International Development Association, and in the Kalahari there are airstrips like that *below*.



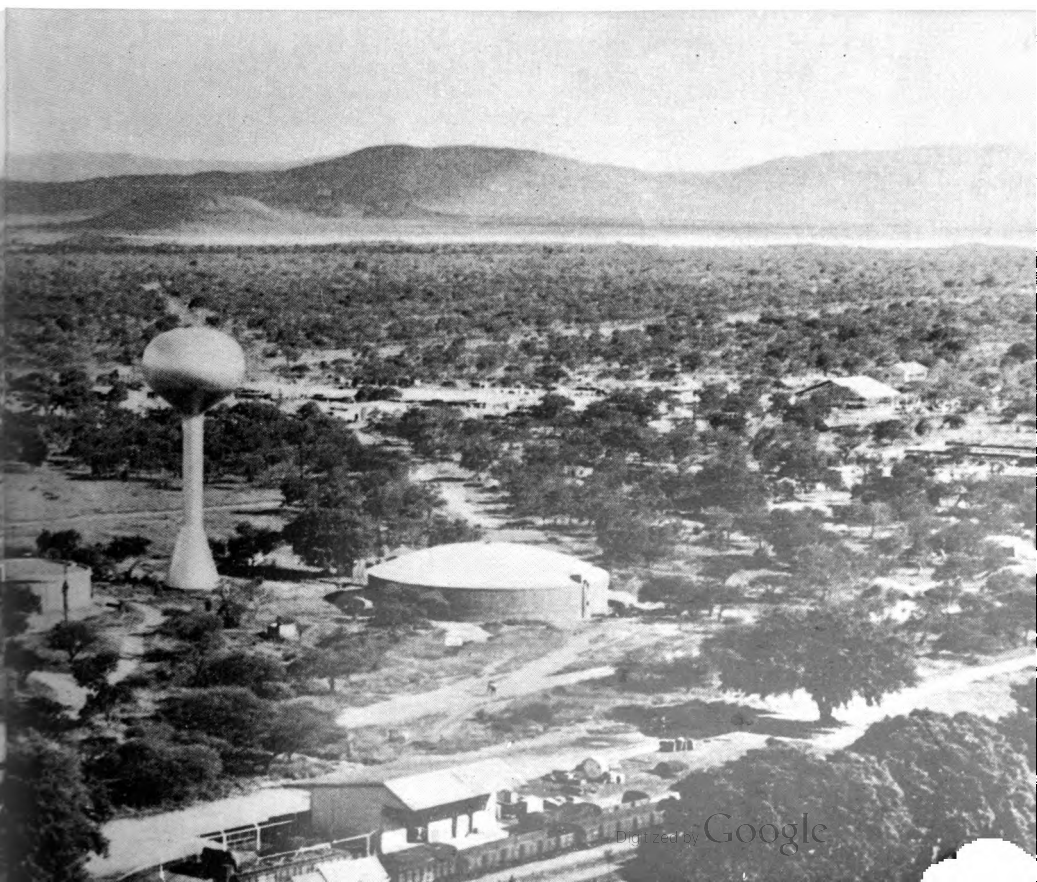


The Prime Minister, Mr. Seretse Khama, *below*, works at the new capital, Gaborone, thrusting up through the bush, *bottom right*. *Above, left*: one of the new office blocks into which the administration moved from Mafeking in 1965.





Centre: the town's modern air-conditioned telephone exchange. *Above:* the Notwani dam which ensures the supply of fresh water to the new capital.





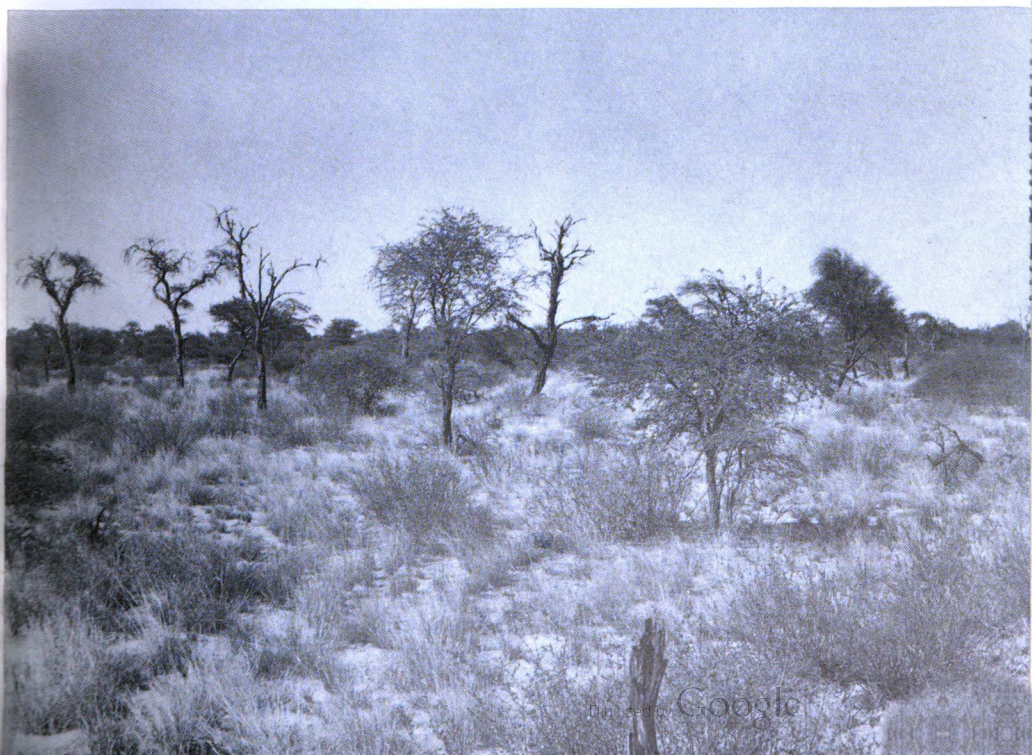
Above: traditional homes at Serowe, the Bamangwato capital.

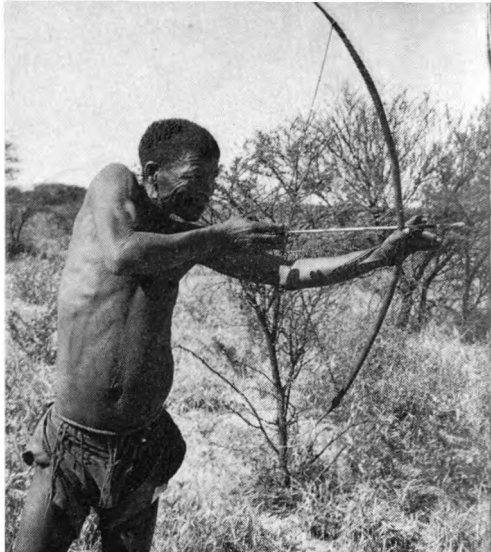
Below: before this bridge was built, St. Martin's Drift was a ford for cattle crossing the Limpopo river, which forms a boundary with the Transvaal.





The Kalahari Desert is the largest area of the country, yet only in the south west are there sand-dunes. There, *above*, police patrol on camels. Most of the Desert consists of sun-scorched grass and scrub *below*.





Bushmen, the chief inhabitants of the Kalahari. *Above, left:* playing a 'hand-piano' made from an old tin with metal keys, *right:* hunting – the arrowhead is detachable and can be used again. The lives of animals form the basis of many Bushmen dances. The Elephant Dance, *below.*



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their extremely primitive way of life is hardly susceptible to government administration on conventional lines. Moreover government servants do not in the normal course of events speak the Bushmen's difficult languages with their clicking consonants. The Bechuanaland Government tackled the problem in an imaginative way by choosing a suitable administrative officer and sending him on a course of anthropology and linguistics. They were lucky to have a suitable officer available, George Silberbauer; he already had a degree in African studies, and he is a man who by temperament enjoys being in charge of ambitious undertakings that allow him a generous measure of independence.

The Bushman Survey began work under Silberbauer in October 1958. Its terms of reference were as follows:

To investigate the numbers and distribution of the Bushman tribes and the tendency of the population to increase or decrease; the economy, languages, social organisation and way of life generally, of the Bushmen and their circumstances in relation to their environment; the effects upon the Bushmen of their contact with European and Bantu peoples; and to report on these aspects and to make recommendations as to administrative measures to further the interests and welfare of the Bushmen.

The survey began at a disadvantage because none of the transport at its disposal turned out to be suitable for use in the desert; but in July 1959 a study began of Bushmen who had not been previously in contact with either Europeans or Bantu. The people chosen were the G/wi, a large tribe that extends from the south-east Ghanzi farms, out into the desert to the east and south-east.

They were a useful choice for several reasons. In the first place, there is no lingua franca among the Bushmen, and if one was to learn a Bushman tongue it had better be one widely spoken. The G/wi are a numerous tribe, and their language can also be understood by some of the other tribes. Moreover with the G/wi it is possible to examine a complete cross-section of Bushman life, from the completely wild men of the desert to the farm-dwelling Bushmen who have become acclimatised to some extent to current ways of life.

The Bushman in his natural state is literally only one step away from extinction. His entire life is devoted to the problem of getting enough to eat; as soon as they are old enough, the men

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spend their days out hunting game and the women spend theirs searching for edible plants. With nothing else to think about, the Bushmen have developed no kind of political or social organisation. The tribes are not tribes in the sense that they have any integrated existence; the biggest social unit is what has been dubbed a 'band', which consists of about 40 people, and the bands have nothing in the way of chiefs. Such leadership as there is depends on the personalities of the men in the bands; leadership is in fact a quality hardly necessary in a community where there are seldom any decisions to make, and then not more important than whether or not to move a village. Moreover decisions are guided entirely by custom and precedent. As there is no private property, there is no acquisitiveness.



Bushman striking a spark

The same considerations rule the standards of private behaviour. There is little temptation to commit a social offence as there is little likelihood of profiting from it. If someone does commit such an offence, the band discuss it together informally, 'in much the same fashion as housewives gossiping', as George Silberbauer puts it; but even then it is quite likely that no action will be taken against the transgressor, unless he happens

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already to be a fairly unpopular man. In this case his punishment would consist of ostracism, and in such a remote community nothing could be more disastrous. It will probably lead to his leaving the band and joining another one somewhere else.

* * *

I visited the Bushman Survey at a spot shown on the map as Xade Pan, where there is smooth level ground enough to make a useful air strip. Strictly speaking, the name should be written with the symbol ≠ rather than the capital X. This represents one of the four Bushman clicks; they are written /, ≠, ! and //. (In the southern Kalahari there is yet another, written ⊙.)

Xade, or ≠ade, Pan, lies on the dried-up watercourses of the Okwa. George Silberbauer and his wife Penny were waiting for us with hot coffee and biscuits; it can be very cold in the Kalahari early in the morning. They had ample warning of the exact time of our arrival; according to Silberbauer, a Bushman can hear an aeroplane at 60 miles. 'I've used them to navigate aircraft into the strip', he once told me. 'When the chap hears the aircraft I ask him to point in the direction the sound comes from, and I call up the pilot and give him a bearing; and sure enough 20 minutes later there he is.'

Four or five little pot-bellied Bushmen stood around by the truck. (The characteristic pot belly is said not to be the result of eating habits but of the habitual stance of the Bushmen.) They seemed neither shy nor curious, nor in any way impressed by the aeroplane when it took off in a plume of dust. They helped load on to the truck the stores we had brought with us, of which the largest item was a sackful of coarse tobacco for them and their friends (Bushman smoke insatiably from their childhood), and waited patiently until it was time to move off on the 10-mile drive to where the Bushman Survey had its current camp. This consisted of two tents and two trucks, disposed comfortably under the shade of some tall acacia trees. As soon as we arrived there George Silberbauer's cook brought us some tea, and when we had finished we walked over to a Bushman village 50 yards away.

The village was almost deserted when we got there, apart from some children and old people. 'Village' is perhaps a misleading word for it; it consisted only of a few temporary shelters made of grass and branches. In one of these we found a school of

eight small children. Like everyone else in the place they took no notice of us, but when George called out a greeting to them they laughed happily at him, and we went and sat down with them. They continued to take no notice of us, either favourable or the reverse, but went on with what they were doing, which in most cases was plucking some red berries off a branch and eating them. Silberbauer's wife, Penny, gave me a berry to eat. It had a sour taste that was not unpleasant as far as it went; but there was very little flesh between the skin and the stone.

George, the only one of us who could communicate, chatted away with them, trying to learn new words for his vocabulary. As they talked, the oldest boy (about nine, by George's estimation) took two flat blades of grass about three inches long, held them in the form of a cross and stuck a spike of grass through the middle. He then poked this spike into a hollow grass-stem in which it moved freely, and with his thumb and forefinger twisted the ends of the flat blades until they formed a toy windmill.

'Did you show him how to do that?' I asked George.

'No. He probably got the idea from the aeroplane.'

A rather pretty girl of about the same age, whose hair was nicely ornamented with the beads which Bushmen make from the shells of ostrich-eggs, picked up a little instrument from the ground where she was sitting and began to play it. It made a soft, tinkling sound like an old-fashioned musical box. It was made of lengths of iron wire, flattened out and laid out over a bridge attached to a box-shaped resonator. I was interested to see that the principle of keys at different levels, like the black and white notes of the piano, had been employed. The girl held the box in her two hands, palm upwards, and sounded the keys with her thumbs. The tune was in a fast tempo, and seemed to consist of one phrase constantly repeated but varied every now and then with an irregular excursion higher up the scale. The two thumbs played two different parts, as it were a melody in the right thumb (which touched the treble end of the keyboard) and a bass in the left.

'Would you like to try?' George asked.

'They'll laugh at me.'

'They won't. They'll just laugh. They laugh because they're pleased.'

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He spoke to the little girl, and she laughed and handed the instrument to me. I held it the way I had seen her holding it and tried to produce the same kind of sounds, but without much luck. They all laughed delightedly.

I passed the thing across to Penny, and she came a good deal closer, though she stroked the keys too hard, and it made them buzz instead of tinkle. The children laughed almost continuously.

While we were playing, they kept up a desultory chatter in soft phrases full of clicks. I asked George if he knew what they were talking about, and he said the boy – whom I came to know later as a cocky little devil who reckoned he had to be included in everything – had seen a bird overhead that he couldn't identify. He said he had seen it the previous day, but it was a new kind of bird. It was new to George, too, who, like everyone in Africa, is something of an amateur ornithologist; we looked it up afterwards in a bird book, but couldn't identify it certainly even then.

The age of the children varied from about nine down to about two. One of the girls, whom I would have guessed to be two or three, was, George told me, actually eight. 'But she's a dwarf,' he explained. 'Her father's a dwarf too. You'll probably meet him later on.'

* * *

In the afternoon we went out shooting for the pot (our own pot and the Bushmen's). Three or four Bushmen jumped into the truck as we started, including a handsome man with a tight-fitting cap on his head. The rest wore nothing but a small leather apron over their private parts.

On our way we met a number of people who stood at the side of the track and hitched lifts, as we were going past a water-hole that had been sunk for their benefit the previous year. Water is a great luxury to the Bushmen, who often have to go several months without it, relying for their moisture on the juice of plants, especially of the *tsama* melon, and on the internal secretions of the animals they kill. They are not given to frequent washing, and when they do wash it is sometimes in their own urine. Consequently they have a pretty powerful body odour; yet oddly enough after quite a short time this stopped worrying me – chiefly, I suppose, because it was something I associated

with them, and they had registered immediately with me as a peculiarly likeable people. They are not handsome, their faces becoming very wrinkled early in their lives, and they have these big pear-shaped bellies balanced by big steatopygous behinds on the fat of which they are erroneously believed to live in times of food shortage. Their curly negroid hair tends to be shaved off in ornamental patterns, and when they are children their scalp is often afflicted with a white fungoid growth that seems to be associated with vitamin deficiency. But they have a superlative grace of movement, and an unselfconscious friendliness towards anyone they have no reason to distrust.

Although we had seen a Bateleur eagle flapping above us like an enormous moth as we set out, and this is supposed to be an omen of good luck in hunting, we came home empty-handed for the kitchen. Not that the desert was devoid of game; it was teeming with animal and bird life. There were little Disneyesque ground-squirrels, sitting up on their hunkers by their burrows; and we chased a long-eared fox through the bush for a time, not with any idea of catching it but so that we could see it as long as possible. Once the man in the cap, whose name must be written /e≠ibi because ordinary Roman letters can't cope with it, patted me sharply on the shoulder and pointed to a fine giraffe that stood watching us in the bush.

If the Bushmen had been very hungry they would have gone after the giraffe for food. They stalk their game until they are very close and shoot it with a poisoned arrow. It is then needful to trail it, perhaps for quite a long time, until the poison works and the animal collapses, when it can be speared to death. But they had had a wildebeeste two days before (wildebeeste meat, as George Silberbauer apologetically said when his cook served it, is like vulcanised blotting-paper); and they confidently expected something else that day. However, springbok, guinea-fowl and eland eluded us in turn.

In spite of the disappointment over the hunting, though, we heard the women in the Bushman village singing that evening and went over to see. It is always the women that sing; they sit in a little huddle round the fire while the men dance round them in a circle, stamping out complex rhythms with their feet and elaborating them with the rattle from strings of beads wound round their calves.

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There were seven or eight women and girls at the fire. Their song was polyphonic and complicated; the voices manœuvred through tricky melismata as flexibly as the voices of Spanish flamenco singers. Only three men were dancing, though. One was /e≠ibi, and another was the dwarf, the father of the little dwarf girl; he was a very cheerful man, and in general physical deformities do not seem to matter much among the Bushmen.

In an article in the *National Geographic* magazine of June 1963, Elizabeth Marshall Thomas tells of a boy with a withered leg, who, once he had demonstrated his ability to hunt and kill a kudu – he had to lean on his crutch while he shot the fatal arrow – was accepted as the head of his band.

While I was watching him, the dwarf dropped out and went behind some bushes to re-tie the rattles on his legs. The rattling beads are made from the cocoon of a moth, and are fixed on lengths of fibre, about an inch apart; the sound they make is sharp but gentle, like the Bushmen's voices.

After a while the dancing stopped and then the singing. Small groups huddled round their separate fires. (Fire is made by the Bushman in the traditional primitive way by spinning a sharp stick between the hands with the point against a piece of dry wood. It is a process strictly reserved for men.) We joined a group that included a handsome intelligent woman called G/ang//ei who was peculiarly helpful to George in answering questions and telling him words. As a rule, asking questions of the Bushmen is a profitless business, because they don't easily visualise hypothetical situations. 'If this or that happened, what would you do?' is not a question they can understand. You must wait until it *does* happen.

While we were talking one of the men said that he had shot an eland that afternoon. (It was probably one of a herd that we had seen but failed to get to close quarters with.) With great delicacy he led the conversation to the point where George was bound to offer to take the truck out next day and bring it in.

The night was unexpectedly chilly. Winter temperatures in the Kalahari can be very low; Tsabong had three hours' snowfall in 1964, and 15 degrees of frost.

* * *

Some Bushman women drifted into the camp in the morning for medical treatment which Penny Silberbauer gives them.

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(She was formerly a nurse.) Two of them had venereal disease, which they must have picked up from contact with Bantu or Europeans; in a community where so little medical help is available, it could spread seriously.

The Bushman hunter navigated the truck through the bush with unhesitating accuracy; their sense of direction, even when the surrounding countryside is not visible through the bush, seems to be infallible. We went plunging straight through the bush, that grew anything up to 20 feet high, driving straight across any shrub that lay in our course without slackening our steady pace of about 5 m.p.h. It was about 13 miles from the camp to the kill, and when we got there we were not more than 50 feet off course.



Male bushbuck

Two men and a boy had been left to guard the eland during the night, and they had cut it into strips and hung it like a display of coronation hunting along a neatly built framework of branches. The smell was overpowering.

The beast's insides, together with a copious amount of dung, lay to one side, and the dung-beetles were having a field-day, rolling great balls of dung along the ground to their holes. They

guide the balls with their rearmost legs and walk backwards; how *they* navigate I don't know.

We sat upwind of the meat while the Bushmen loaded it on to the truck. George's driver brought me the head of the arrow to see, which had been recovered from the dead animal and would be used again. It was made of iron, the barbed shape of the traditional arrow-head. The shaft would have been of reed, light and straight, and not provided with flights; and the poison applied not on the arrow-head itself but on the front part of the shaft. This is a safety precaution; a quite small amount of poison in a man's bloodstream can be fatal. The poison is made from the larva of a beetle, *Diamphidia simplex*.

The Bushman hunter stalks his prey until he is within a few yards of it, when he can be reasonably sure of a hit. The arrow-shaft drops off when the head enters the hide, and is picked up and used again. The hunters, who work in pairs, do not always at once follow the buck they have shot, but make a good study of its spoor, so that they can be sure of recognising it, and then go home until the following morning. Then, very early next day, they follow the trail until they come to their quarry, dead or dying from the effects of the poison, and if necessary give it a *coup de grace* with a spear. The arrow-head will be retrieved and straightened if necessary for re-use; the one I saw was doubled right over at the tip.

That evening we went to the village to see the eland meat being eaten. (Eland is royal game, incidentally, but no one interferes with the Bushmen in this kind of context.) Some of them were boiling it up in pots; others contented themselves with tucking it in among the ashes of the fire until it was warm, no more, then beating the ashes off and cutting themselves little strips with a knife. The meat was shared out among all the band, a share being given even to an old man almost dying of senility, who could obviously never do his share of hunting any more, and to a sour, solitary old woman who seemed to have cut herself off in all other ways from the society of her companions.

While the band was eating, Penny Silberbauer went around the village treating the fungus-clad heads of the children. Everyone was very patient. Children who didn't happen to be with their own mothers were presented for treatment by the nearest mother available, or by one of the older girls. Two very

small boys were playing at throwing a tin to one another. One of them was left-handed. A little boy with a small bow and some untipped arrows went to the edge of the village and took a few ineffectual pots at birds.

* * *

The social life of the Bushmen is characterised by an extreme tolerance and good nature. Violence between them is almost unknown. Once when a young boy had wanted to come with us on the truck and was forbidden by his elders to do so, he broke into noisy weeping, while the tears drove twin furrows down the dust on his chest; but I was told that such a public display of emotion, even among children, was unusual.

The boys marry when they are about 16, and the girls when they are eight or nine; but they don't have sexual relations until after the wives are past puberty, which must be a great strain on the continence of the boys. Until then, marriage means that the girl 'keeps house' for the boy, and the boy provides for the girl, and also to some extent for her parents. 'But surely,' I asked, 'if the girls marry at that age, the one that played the hand-piano for us must be a bit overdue?'

'Not seriously,' George said. He added, 'If she's married to anybody, it must be to me. When a girl makes a hut for a boy and he comes and lives in it, then that settles the matter; and she always clears a space for me to sit down in when I go over to talk to them.'

If such an unfortunate complication had indeed arisen, it would not have been difficult to resolve. In the first place, Bushmen are polygamous. In the second place divorce involves no more than mutual consent. If a man catches his wife in adultery with another man, popular opinion will allow him to swear and shout publicly at him for a week or so, and that is about as far as retribution is likely to be taken. Physical violence is very unusual, and is regarded as a shameful thing.

Wives begin to bear children a year or so after puberty, and an average Bushman woman probably has a family of two or three: 'probably' because the figures are hard to come by. The mortality rate (again probably) is of the order of one baby in three. Children are not weaned until 3 or 4 years old, and women do not have further children until the current ones have been weaned. They treat their children with great affection, and the

other children of the band too; and the children respond with trustfulness and good behaviour.

A curious feature of Bushman social life is the 'joking relationship'. Joking partners are the most intimate kind of friends; they may, says George Silberbauer's report, 'freely help themselves to one another's possessions and tease, swear at and joke with one another in as obscene a fashion as they wish'. When they are of an age, they will go out hunting together or gathering food plants together; if of opposite sexes, they are the preferred marriage partners. A complementary situation is the 'avoidance relationship' whose principals treat one another with a cold politeness, and between whom marriage would be regarded as incestuous.

Belief in the supernatural varies between tribe and tribe (as indeed do many of the customs I have mentioned here, my information being based on this report on the G/wi). There is no organised religion, but there is a belief in a beneficent deity and in a malevolent power. Beneath the world there is an underground world peopled by fierce beasts and men, and by the ghosts of the dead. Evil is thrown down from the sky in the form of invisible wooden splinters which are absorbed by the women, and extracted from them at ritual dances where the evil is first absorbed by the men, who go into a deep trance, and then expelled from them by further dancing and massage. These dances are performed as often as twice a week in the summer, and have a markedly therapeutic effect on the band.

* * *

Current official policy with regard to the Bushmen is to leave them as far as possible to themselves. They are gradually being absorbed into the general community as they come increasingly into contact with more advanced people on farms and cattle-posts; absorption will be complete, according to present reckoning, in no more than 30 years, probably less.

Meanwhile they are being encouraged to make their lives more comfortable. Boreholes are being provided and maintained to supply them with water; and it has been found that they take happily to keeping goats, which can live in the most spartan conditions of the Kalahari.

I visited one of the boreholes while I was with the Bushman Survey. A trained man is required to start the engine that works

the pump, but once the water begins to gush everyone knows what to do – including looking carefully under each drum before it is moved into position for filling in case there is a snake.

While the men worked, the women sat waiting with their water-bottles made from blown-out ostrich-eggs. Some of them were prettily ornamented with small coloured beads – trade goods, not the indigenous articles made from ostrich-egg shells. The men wear a few beads sometimes too, and ear-rings quite often (the children often have their ears pierced at a few years old); also occasionally a band around the leg where the garter would go. A few of the women, and one of the men, were wearing an item or two of European clothing, their dividend from a period working, or squatting, on a farm. Whatever the merits of European clothing on Bushmen from the aesthetic point of view, they are deplorable from the medical point of view; the Bushmen have no conception of private property, and anything of this kind gets passed around from one wearer to another, carrying its potential of infection with it.

Some of the children occupied themselves playing with a little trap. The Bushmen use snares to catch small game – birds, rats, an occasional *meerkat* or ground-squirrel – and make them from bent saplings and vegetable fibre. The children amused themselves by setting the snare and then springing it by throwing a stone at it. They were delighted to show me how it worked when I came to watch them. The whole of the borehole operation had about it something of the atmosphere of a village fête.

* * *

The southern and less deserted part of the Kalahari is administered by a District Commissioner stationed on the edge of the desert at Tsabong.

You can drive to Tsabong across country from Lobatsi; but to do it comfortably in a day from the 'line of rail' it is best to cross into the Republic of South Africa and take the road that runs from Mafeking along the south side of the Molopo river. This is a good road, metalled for a fair distance, and has the advantage that at Bray, 100 miles or so out of Mafeking, there is an hotel where you can have lunch.

On the opposite bank of the Molopo (which marks the border between Bechuanaland and the Republic) there is a tract of country that was formerly run as a ranch by the Commonwealth

Development Corporation; but a lot of it has now been handed over to private ownership for mixed farming, which is very successful. As you go westward, however, the land degenerates until you are back in the sandy Kalahari. The rainfall in this bottom left-hand corner of the desert is as little as nine inches in a year. The inhabitants are a mixed lot with no tribal organisation – some Damara from South-West Africa, some Barolong, some Bakgalagadi, a little community of 'coloureds'. Their only common tongue is Afrikaans.

Formerly this southern border of Bechuanaland was virtually an open frontier. Although there was a frontier post at Bray, with South African policemen inspecting passports, there was nothing at the crossing at Werda, where the Bechuanaland Police have a post, except a gate and a notice warning that importation of arms, ammunition and liquor without a permit is prohibited. Further to the west a similar lack of formality existed on the track – it is hardly a road, and is unsigned at its junction with the main route – that leads to Tsabong. Recently, however, a frontier fence has been built by the South African Government along the whole frontier as a measure of control against animal disease.

The Tsabong track is hard going for motorists. To cover its 35 miles in two hours is considered good motoring. It is not generally considered ample compensation that the countryside is unexpectedly pretty, that there will probably be some game to see, and that in the season of the year there is a profusion of little red and yellow wild flowers growing by the roadside.

Tsabong is little more than a huddle of government buildings and a store on the side of a sand-dune, with a small African village on the other slopes of the dune. The district of which it is the administrative centre is divided into two parts, the northern section being run from Tshane, 150 tedious miles north of Tsabong. Being so scantily populated, it is not a difficult district to administer; there is a detachment of police, but no tribal police as in other places because there is no organised tribe to need them or to find them. There is an African Authority appointed by the government at Tsabong and another at Tshane; and under them they have headmen – five and eight respectively – who, the District Commissioner at Tsabong told me, are not of very high quality.

The people are, of course, cattle-owners, but the cattle live under difficulties in those parts. The only water is from boreholes, and there are 4,000 cattle depending on each borehole instead of the optimum figure of 500. On the other side of the Molopo, South African farmers have found water where the Bechuanaland Geological Survey reckoned there was none; but they had to bore deep to get it. What is more, it is thought that the water in the existing boreholes may dry up after a time – in as little as 15 years by one estimate.

Education plods gamely on. There are five schools in the northern area, at which just over 1,000 children are getting primary education. In the southern area there are 10 schools, but they attract only slightly more children than the north's five.

Tsabong's other amenities comprise a prison, a dispensary and a courtroom. The prison is a clean, tidy affair; when I saw it, all the prisoners were outside, sitting or squatting in a half-circle under the eye of a warder. There is little temptation to run away if there is only the desert to run to.

The dispensary has beds for a few in-patients. As elsewhere in the country, tuberculosis is the main trouble; also as elsewhere, the attendance of a doctor has to be an occasional luxury. Periodic visits are made from the capital, and these are augmented by a South African doctor from Kuruman. The dispensary when I saw it was scrupulously clean and tidy, and the staff clearly devoted.

As for the courtroom, it can be made to serve a variety of other social purposes. I happened to catch it housing the ladies of an African welfare meeting who were debating in shrill high spirits. Outside it I was introduced to a man called Ambrose who had recently begun to buy a Bible on the instalment plan. The total cost of it was to be £16 – a lot of money to pay for a Bible anywhere, but in those parts the equal possibly of a year's income.

The police detachment at Tsabong is some 25 strong, and among their miscellaneous duties is the taking of readings from the meteorological instruments kept there. Police patrols have to be made on camels, as these are the only form of transport that copes satisfactorily with the sandy terrain. Camels are not indigenous to those parts; the herd was formed from surplus

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beasts belonging to the South African police. When it was reckoned that they were getting too inbred and needed a new bull, the nearest place from which a bull camel could be obtained was the Sudan. To trek a camel 2,000 miles seemed on reflection to involve too much expense, and in the end the South African police were once more able to oblige.

A camel works until it is about 30 years old. A good pace for a camel patrol would be about 5 miles in the hour, though camels can be trained to do far better than that.

One of the principal targets of the police in that area is game poaching. Inside the District Commissioner's office at Tsabong there is a gruesome collection of steel traps taken from poachers operating in the district, some of them still holding fast in their steel teeth the legs of small animals torn off as the beasts struggled for freedom. The frontier fence should reduce the extent of this trouble; so, perhaps even more, should the presence of an African District Commissioner, before whom any offenders caught will be brought for judgment.

* * *

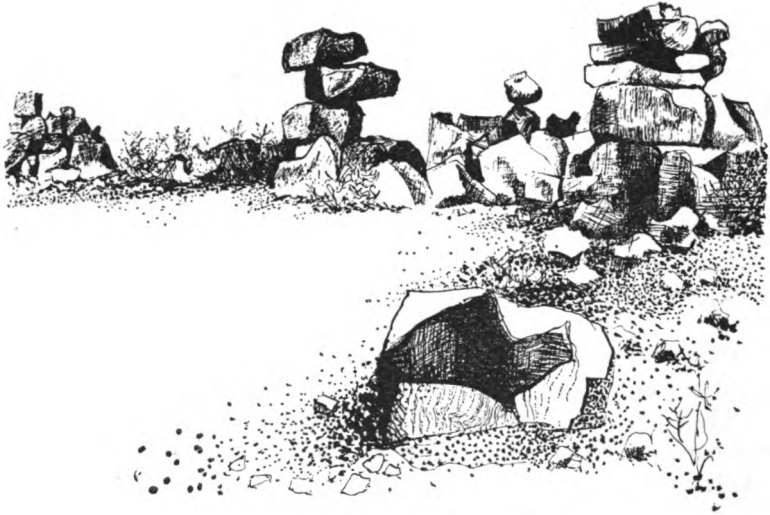
One of the most insistent legends about the Kalahari Desert is that of the Lost City.

The Lost City of the Kalahari was first jolted into fame by one Gilarmi A. Farini (in reality an American showman named William Hunt). According to the account of his travels that Farini gave in his book *Through the Kalahari Desert*, he trekked in 1885 from Hope Town, near Kimberley, to a point some way north of Lake Ngami and back again. Close investigation of his movements suggests that he must have covered some 3,000 miles in about 50 days, a rate of progress about four times as fast as the pioneer trekkers could generally manage. Suspicious commentators made inquiries that led them to believe that he had never in fact journeyed north of the Molopo river except for a short trip into an area that was visited almost every day by local hunters, and that he stuck to the recognised trade routes.

None the less his book aroused sufficient interest for him to be invited to lecture before the Royal Geographical Society in March 1886.

Farini's story is that when his party were returning from a hunting trip, apparently somewhere between Lehututu and Rietfontein, they discovered a phenomenal ruined site. There

was, Farini reported, 'a long line of stone which looked like the Chinese Wall after an earthquake. We traced the remains for nearly a mile, mostly a heap of huge stones, but all flat-sided, and here and there with the cement perfect and plainly visible between the layers.... The general outline of this wall was in the form of an arc, inside of which lay at intervals of about forty feet a series of heaps of masonry in the shape of an oval or obtuse ellipse. . . .'



Excavating below the surface, they discovered a pavement of large stones, about 20 feet long. 'The outer stones were long ones and lay at right angles to the inner ones. This pavement was intersected by another similar one at right angles, forming a Maltese cross, in the centre of which must have stood an altar, column, or some sort of monument, for the base was quite distinct, composed of loose pieces of fluted masonry.'

Farini's son was a member of his party. He was an expert photographer, and produced some good photographs of various points of interest on their trip – but none of the ruins of the Lost City. Instead, Farini has used what is either a wash drawing or a photograph so heavily touched up that its photographic basis is unrecognisable. (It has even been claimed that the same photograph, touched up differently, was used for another illustration in the book.)

Explorers have been looking for the site of Farini's discovery ever since, mostly without success. In 1961 a party of Boy Scouts under the leadership of Mr. J. F. Leech claimed to have found it, near Mt. Aha, west of the Okavango swamp. But Mr. Leech's conclusions were against Farini. 'If I had Farini's flair for showmanship,' he wrote, 'and did not know conglomerate from stone and mortar, I might have described this remarkable natural feature in the same words as he used in his book.'

Three years later a party was organised by the Johannesburg *Star* to go to the site Mr. Leech had visited. They found it without difficulty and confirmed its purely natural origins. This did not prove, however, that Farini's lost city only consisted of natural rock formations, for Mr. Leech's site proved to be nowhere near the position of Farini's city, however vaguely defined.

An expedition led by Mr. A. J. Clement in the same year found a more likely site in the Eierdoppkoppies, south of Rietfontein. Writing in the *Geographical Magazine* (London) for March 1965, Mr. Clement says: 'The outline of a large oval-shaped amphitheatre, perhaps a third of a mile in breadth and a mile in length, could hardly be mistaken. In numerous places there was a striking resemblance to a double wall constructed from large, glistening black rocks; it required little imagination to see how many of the individual boulders could be confused with square building blocks. There were several examples of flat slabs of rock perched precariously like table-tops on underlying rocks, and one of them closely matched the one appearing in Farini's illustration. One or two rocks showed a kind of fluting. . . .'

When Mr. Clement showed Farini's picture to Rietfontein's oldest inhabitant, he at once claimed to know the place and pointed out the Eierdoppkoppies on a map.

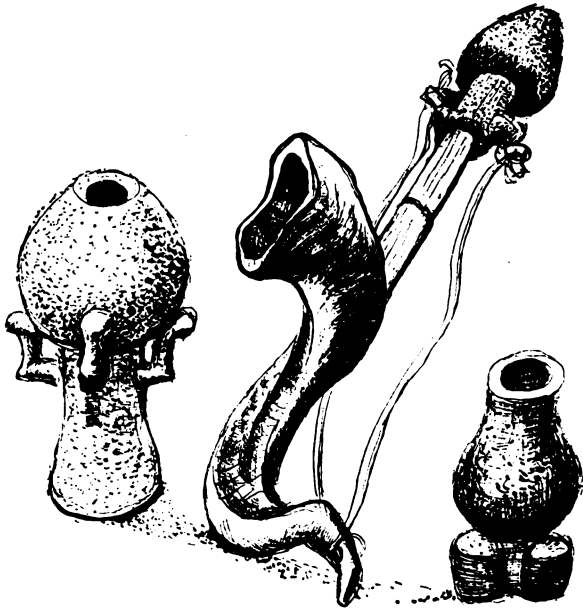
Mrs. M. E. du Toit, who has made four expeditions in search of the ruins, has come up with some good commonsense pointers as to where it is most likely to be found, or not to be found.

There is no probability, she points out, that a great city would have existed in the heart of the waterless Kalahari; moreover if there was a city it must have been situated somewhere near a source of building stone. The chances are that it must have existed, if it did exist, on an old trek route, near to a river or pan (and it has to be borne in mind that rivers now dry might then have been flowing); and since the only available supply of stone

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would be from the Nossop river, it must have been reasonably close to that.

There is a file in the Bechuanaland Government headquarters fat with applications to explore for the lost city, and with reports of expeditions that produced nothing except a good time for the explorers. In spite of all the hints available to them from Farini, Leech, Clement, Mrs. du Toit and the rest, no lost city has turned up. Is it all a pure legend? Well, George Silberbauer for one believes in its reality, though not on the evidence of Farini. Perhaps that file may produce something yet.



Tobacco pipe-bowls with (centre) pipe showing bowl fitted

6. GABERONES

IN the year 1880 there succeeded to the chieftainship of the Batlokwa tribe a man named Gaborone. He was 55 years old. A few years later there was a tribal breakaway of familiar kind, and Gaborone led his followers to Moshaweng, in the country of the Bakwena. He courteously reported their presence there to the Bakwena chief, Sechele, and sent him a gift, in return for which Sechele allowed the Batlokwa to settle in their new home.

When land was needed for the railway later on, however, the Bakwena had a new chief, Sebele, and he ceded the Batlokwa territory to the British South Africa Company provided only that a house should be given to Gaborone in his original country. The Batlokwa would have none of this, however; they were fond of their chief and they wanted him with them, and rather than lose him they offered to pay rent to the company if they could be allowed to stay at Moshaweng. The company agreed, and fixed the rent at £150 a year, adding a rider that 'the old chief should not be disturbed in his lifetime'. This generous arrangement worked out to less advantage to the company than they deserved, for the chief, then in his 60s, lived on until 1932, when he died at the reputed age of 106. The home of the tribe at Moshaweng was renamed for him Gaborone's, now written Gaberones.

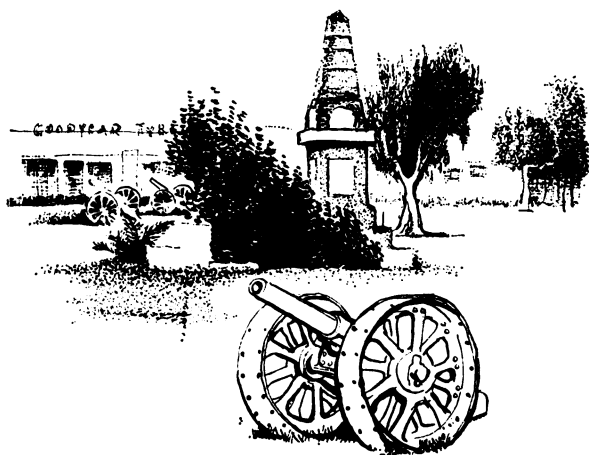
Gaberones is about 400 miles south of Bulawayo and 250 miles west of Johannesburg. It is on the main road and rail routes, and it stands on Crown land. When it became evident that Bechuanaland must have a capital inside its own borders, Gaberones was clearly a good candidate for attention.

Before development began, it was a characteristic government camp; three miles off was the railway station adjoining a big dusty square and flanked on one side by the post office, on the other by a garage. The usual assortment of Chevrolet pick-ups and miscellaneous station-wagons stood outside the hotel. The population of 1,000, more or less, included the Police Depot and Training School, the Public Works Department Mechanical Workshop and the Bechuanaland Training Centre. The Notwani river

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commonly dry, runs on the east side of the town; a dam some way to the south was enough to provide water for the community.

The water supply was one of the key considerations in choosing Gaberones as a great new centre of population. To meet the needs of the incoming residents, a big new dam was built on the Notwani to the north of the old one. Some two miles south of Gaberones, an earth wall almost a mile wide was raised, and behind it there was created an artificial lake more than seven miles long. This provides an assured daily supply of three million gallons for the new town. It is linked to a purification works able to produce half a million gallons a day, which is already insufficient for the requirements of Gaberones.



Gun at Mafeking, used during the siege

The dam also provides facilities for fishing and sailing. An aquatic club has been inaugurated for which the rules were drawn up even before the dam began to fill. The founder responsible for them was a doctor, and the rules are said to have begun in the original draft with detailed instructions on the avoidance of bilharzia.

The layout of the new township is modern and attractive. In plan it is roughly quadrant-shaped, with the government offices at the hub of the quadrant and a tree-lined pedestrian precinct running grandly out to the circumference. This precinct forms the main shopping centre; no cars are allowed on it, but there is generous parking space on either side. Behind the shops lies the residential area, where the houses are grouped imaginatively around open spaces designated for community recreational purposes. The houses are within easy walking distance of the shops.

All the roads in Gaberones are to be tarred – the dust blowing off untarred roads is an ever-present vexation in Africa – and street-lighting is provided. There is main drainage, and municipal refuse collection. Electricity is provided by a 2,000-kW generating station, steam-operated.

The residents of Gaberones will be well catered for from the point of view of amenities. There is a golf course, and a club providing tennis courts and a swimming-pool. The modest existing clinic is to be augmented by a new modern hospital, and there are to be two new primary schools and a new secondary school.

Some way to the south-west of the new residential area is the new industrial area. It lies alongside the railway, and a new spur line is being built to serve it. It is hoped that this may become a centre for light industry.

Gaberones has an airstrip that is capable of taking fairly large aircraft; but it is a grass strip, and not all-weather. A broadcasting station with medium- and short-wave transmitters is being built.

The carving of the new capital out of what was mostly virgin bush was part of the five-year plan on which Bechuanaland embarked in 1963. The cost of the plan was estimated at a little over £10 million. Of this, expenditure on the Gaberones headquarters accounts for just under £2·5 million, most of which had to be found in the early stages of the development plan in order to enable the move from Mafeking to be completed by 1966.

The first building of the new town to be finished was the telephone exchange, followed by a police station. The telephone exchange was complete before the main part of the town had risen more than a few feet from the ground. On the outskirts of the new site, an unsightly shanty town housed the workmen

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employed on the job; it is being gradually replaced by small brick houses let at low rents.

Costains, the contractors, started operations with a mainly Rhodesian skilled labour force, but were able gradually to replace a substantial number with Batswana. Little exists among the Batswana in the way of organised labour; there are several trade unions extant, mostly rather right-wing in outlook (the Bechuanaland Workers' Union is the biggest); but in spite of government encouragement they have no great membership. (This did not prevent a strike in 1964.) Recent legislation has codified terms of employment between worker and employer, and understanding of the trade union notion will no doubt increase as the need for it grows with the expansion of industry.

7. THE BAKWENA — BAMANGWATO — BANGWAKETSE

THE great majority of Bechuanaland's inhabitants belong to the Batswana, who are a division of the Basotho. The Batswana are believed to have come originally from East Africa, though there is little certainty about this, nor is it possible to say with any kind of confidence when they arrived in their present habitat. They are at any rate thought to have been there by A.D. 1600 (Schapera, *The Tswana*, p. 15).

The majority of the Batswana live in the fertile regions of the east, but they are to be found all over the country, except in the inhospitable fastnesses of the Kalahari. (There are also a great number of them living in the Transvaal and Cape Province.) Their history up to about a century and a half ago was one of increasing tribal fragmentation as small groups left their parent tribes under some ambitious or disgruntled member of the chiefly family and set up new tribes of their own. The names of the tribes almost always derive from the names of the individuals leading such secessions.

By tradition all the Batswana peoples are both pastoral and agricultural. Cattle are perhaps the most important factor in their lives (there is still a tendency among reactionary tribesmen to regard the amassing of cattle as an end in itself, much as property speculators in the west appear to regard the acquisition of property); but they are not exclusively devoted to cattle-raising and cattle-tending like the more exclusively pastoral tribes, such as the Masai.

Their characteristic mode of life embraces both activities. Their permanent homes are set up, generally close to the tribal capital, in an area where crops may be grown. The agricultural land remains the property of the tribe, but plots are allocated to individuals to farm. The cattle, however, are not kept in the same area but in another place, often quite distant, known as the cattle-station. So the tribesman divides his time between ploughing, sowing, tending and reaping his crops in one place, and look-

ing after his cattle in another. Often enough the two activities may conflict, in which case he may leave his wife or his children in charge of one or the other.

Current developments in agriculture may ultimately threaten this way of life, when it is more generally realised that crops may be raised not only for mere subsistence but for a profit, and farmers tend to devote more and more time to their attention. Cattle, however, are by a long way the country's most important concern, and there is no likelihood of their being neglected. Specialisation walks in the wake of progress everywhere.

In one tribe, the Barolong, the system of land tenure for agricultural purposes is significantly different. I deal with this in Chapter 8.

The Batswana tribes can trace their chiefly lines back for several centuries, but (as with other nations) there comes a time when history and legend become indistinguishable. The founding father of all the Batswana tribes in these legends was one Masilo. Masilo's son Malope had three sons, Kwena, Ngwato and Ngwaketse, and from these three sons are named the Bakwena, Bamangwato and Bangwaketse tribes.

There are various versions of the founding legend. Sometimes Kwena is demoted to being Malope's second son instead of his eldest, the first-born being Hurutse, whose descendent tribe, the Bahurutse, no longer have a corporate existence in Bechuanaland. Sometimes Kwena is Malope's brother, either elder or younger according to choice of source. Sometimes Kwena is Ngwaketse's father, in which case he becomes Ngwato's grandfather.

The Bakwena

The Bakwena regard themselves as the senior of the Batswana tribes. At the time when tribal tradition begins to be fairly firm, they were living in the Transvaal. They split up as the result of a famine, and a section of them moved into the hills near Molepolole, pushing the existing inhabitants west into the Kalahari. They lived a peripatetic and disputatious life in and around this area, and were the first tribe with whom Livingstone settled. In 1848 he baptised their chief, Sechele I, into the Christian religion.

Sechele's four wives provided a difficulty that had to be overcome before this could be done.

'Sunday 6th August,' wrote Livingstone in his journal. 'Sechele remained as a spectator at the celebration of the Lord's supper, and when we retired he asked me how he ought to act in reference to his superfluous wives. . . . Advised him to do according to what he saw written in God's book, but to treat them gently, for they had sinned in ignorance and if driven away harshly might be lost eternally.'

What Sechele saw written in God's book was that his superfluous wives would have to go, but it was a very unpopular move with his tribe. They adopted a pretty mutinous attitude towards him for a time, and certainly made no move to imitate his example.

This was at Kolobeng, where Livingstone had built a house as 'an evidence that I tried to introduce Christ's gospel into that country'. Kolobeng proved to be an infertile location, and both Livingstone and the tribe left it in 1851 (the house being subsequently pillaged by a party of marauding Boers). It was not so infertile to Livingstone's teaching in the long run, however; Molepolole, the present Bakwena capital, is a stronghold of the London Missionary Society, and I met three nice old men there who spoke of Livingstone with the utmost reverence, almost as if he had only just gone from them.

The first thing you notice about Molepolole is the way in which the houses are walled in with low dry-stone walls of beautiful workmanship. The characteristic Batswana home consists of a biggish central hut and one or two smaller ones, all included in a walled-off compound, and it is interesting to see how the walls are sometimes given a kind of municipal uniformity by their builders. In Molepolole and Thamaga (the next village) they have these walls of flat stones, very tidily squared off. In Kanye, the Bangwaketse capital, the trend is to red-brown earth walls decorated with a simple line in a lighter colour, following the outline of the wall in a rectilinear pattern. In Serowe of the Bamangwato the people grow domestic hedges of a prolific evergreen shrub.

The shape of the traditional dwelling-house does not vary much among the tribes of Bechuanaland. There is an earth wall that stops short of the roof; the conical thatched roof is an inde-

pendent structure supported on poles outside the wall, so that there is a clear space all round between the walls and the roof. This basic design serves equally well for a simple hut or a more ambitious house that may have frame windows in the walls and a proper door instead of a mere opening. The roof is normally thatched with grass.

The Bakwena today occupy some 15,000 square miles of country west of the railway near the southern border. Their present chief is Neale Sechele, but he is an invalid and there is an acting chief, Mack Sechele. The Scottish ring of these names is undoubtedly the result of the presence among the tribe of the Scottish missionaries of the London Missionary Society from Livingstone onward. Sechele II, the grandson of Livingstone's convert and the son of that Chief Sebele who went with Khama and Bathoen to see Queen Victoria in England, had a son called McIntyre.

The most distinguished of the present Scottish residents in Molepolole is Dr. A. M. Merriweather, who is not only the head of the hospital there but the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The Bakwena today number some 73,000, of whom 30,000 live in and around Molepolole.

The Bamangwato

Strictly speaking the Bamangwato should be called the Bangwato, but the other form is so commonly used now, including its employment on official maps and so on, that it would be pedantic to insist on the theoretically correct formation.

The Bamangwato are by far the biggest tribe in Bechuanaland; their strength at the last census was 201,000, about 37 per cent of the total population of the land. They occupy about 48,000 square miles astride the railway from Ngamiland to the Limpopo; their capital, Serowe, straggles over a series of low hills like a miniature Rome, six miles across at its widest point, with a population of 34,000.

High on a steep hill overlooking the town stands the Khama Memorial. A level garden has been made among the pink rocks where the rock-rabbits sit and sun themselves, and four tombs have been placed there. The most striking of them is the big

cenotaph dedicated to Khama the Great. It is surmounted by a bronze duiker.

The duiker antelope is the tribal emblem. One day when Ngwato was in the course of his interminable fights with his brothers Kwena and Ngwaketse, he was hard pressed by his adversaries and hid himself in a clump of bush. Kwena's followers knew he must be near and began to search the bush for him; but as soon as they began to do so a duiker sprang up and ran off. 'Oh well,' they said, 'it's no good looking here. If a man was hiding here he'd have frightened that duiker away.' So they left the search and Ngwato out of gratitude adopted the duiker as his tribal totem instead of the Kwena crocodile he had used till then.

A smaller memorial marks the grave of Sekgoma, Khama's son and Seretse's father, and there is a tiny one with a marble angel on it for Sekgoma's eldest son, who died in infancy. During the disputes over Seretse's succession, which I shall come to in a moment, this angel was stolen and used for witchcraft purposes; there is a scar round its neck where the head has been broken off and refixed.

The fourth grave is little more than an oblong plot covered in rubble and crowned with coils of barbed wire and some dusty artificial flowers. This is the grave of Tshekedi Khama. I was astonished to find it in such a state, and asked the Tribal Secretary what kind of political acrimony was involved. There was no political significance at all, he reassured me; Tshekedi died only six years before, and they would get round to putting up a proper memorial to him in due course.

The Bamangwato separated from the Bakwena in the middle of the eighteenth century. The chiefly line of succession is marked with intrigue and dispute at intervals, but it took on a degree of firmness with the accession of Khama III, known today as Khama the Great. He was the eldest of the 16 sons of Sekgoma I. He and his brother Khamane were early converts to Christianity, and their persistent opposition to the initiation ceremonies for adolescents, which they refused themselves and denied their families, made them unpopular with the tribal Establishment and they had to fly for their lives.

Sekgoma had an elder brother, Matsheng, who had been captured by the Matabele when he was a boy and was living in exile. Sekgoma thought it might strengthen his position with the

tribe if he invited Matsheng home; but here he made a bad miscalculation, and almost at once Matsheng was chief and Sekgoma was in exile.

This gave Khama his chance to organise a *coup d'état* of his own and step into the chieftainship; but true to family form Khamane now began to intrigue against his brother and Khama – no doubt as conscious of the weakness of his claim as Henry IV of his – called Sekgoma back. It was no good; fighting broke out between them, and in 1875 he drove him away again and resumed the reins of power. This time he held on to them until his death 48 years later at the age of 95 or so.

Khama was a strong and enlightened ruler by the standards of his day. He put down a lot of tribal customs that he and the missionaries thought objectionable and worked at re-educating his people according to the unbending principles of the London Missionary Society. He built schools and helped the missions, and he collaborated with the British with loyalty but without any surrender of his own prerogatives. When he accepted Warren's offer of protection in 1885, he explicitly proposed that the land he was offering should be settled by British settlers. He provided a contingent for the British force that moved against Lobengula in 1893 – though he withdrew it after one battle, feeling no doubt that he had made his gesture.

His son Sekgoma spent a period in exile with the Bakwena when relations between them were exacerbated by Sekgoma's attempts to win himself a bigger share in tribal matters; but they were reconciled later, and Sekgoma succeeded to the chieftainship on Khama's death. However, he himself died two years later, leaving as his heir a boy of four, Seretse. There was a brief unsuccessful regency by Khamane's eldest son, Gorewang, and then Khama's youngest son Tshekedi became regent.

Tshekedi was only 23 when he took over, but he showed himself at once to be a forceful, capable and enlightened leader in the mould of his famous father. He was zealous in promoting education, and built Bechuanaland's first secondary school, Moeng College, with money that he raised by a tribal levy. He was also extremely jealous of his own rights, and once even went so far as to bring an action against the government, contesting the legality of the Native Administration and Native Tribunals Proclamations. His argument was that the Proclamations interfered with

native law and custom and violated certain treaty rights. He lost his case, which he brought in association with Chief Bathoen II of the Bangwaketse; but not without honour.

Twice in his long regency Tshekedi hit the headlines. The first time was when he ordered, after a trial before the tribal *kgotla* (council), that a white man who had been persistently interfering with African women should be flogged. The uproar that this caused among the European populations of South Africa, Rhodesia and Britain was so tremendous that the acting High Commissioner, Admiral Sir Edward Evans ('Evans of the Broke'), drummed up a contingent of the Royal Navy from Simonstown and sent them with a gun to depose Tshekedi by force. The Bamangwato, as courteous as ever, helped the Navy to site their artillery and sat by impassively while their regent was formally deprived of his power. A month later he was back in office.

Tshekedi was deposed again in 1950. Seretse, the heir to the chieftainship, was reading law at Balliol. In London he met, and married, an English girl, Ruth Williams. This time the tribe as well as the European population were outraged, and Tshekedi regarded the union as totally undesirable. The matter was put to the *kgotla*, who first supported Tshekedi but then went back on their decision and backed Seretse. So the British Government stepped in with a heavy foot and ordered Seretse out of Bechuanaland. For good measure they also ordered Tshekedi to go and live with some other tribe, hoping thus to alleviate tribal anxiety.

The Bamangwato were persistently importuned to choose another regent, and equally persistently they declined to do so. So the British had to set up an administration of their own. In due course Tshekedi was allowed to come back to his own people, but not to hold office. He died in 1959 at the age of 56, honoured and respected by Africans and British alike for his serious and valuable devotion to the interests of his tribe. His son Leeapeetswe is the present African Authority at Serowe. His nephew Seretse, having faithfully observed the British Government's prohibition against his succession to the chieftainship, became Bechuanaland's first Prime Minister.

Serowe — generally pronounced rather as if it were spelt 'Serui' — has about it an indefinable sense of being a capital city. This is illusory really, for as a matter of fact it has only been the

Bamangwato capital for quite a short while. The Batswana swarm like bees around their chiefs, and Bamangwato chiefs have set up their abode from the Botletle river in the north to Palapye in the south, but never until now with any sign of permanence. They have been at Serowe only since 1902. Before that they were at Palapye, where the water supply proved inadequate, and before that they were at Shoshong.

Capitals must be more stationary in these days of permanent buildings, and Serowe is well endowed with these. There is a fine council chamber, and good buildings for the tribal administration. There is a first-class welfare centre, the particular concern of Ruth Khama, comprising a big hall with a stage at one end and a spacious foyer at the other, a health centre dealing mostly with post-natal problems, and a library. There are school buildings of varying degrees of suitability, not counting the teachers' training college and the proposed new secondary school, which are not tribal undertakings. There is also a block of teachers' quarters whose provenance is of some interest. By tradition, all stray cattle found must be sold and the money given to the chief. Leeapeetswe, the African Authority, has decided instead to allocate all money obtained from this source, known as *matemela*, to the building of these teachers' houses, which will be let at very small rents.

Much of the money needed for the building of the welfare centre was obtained from the ubiquitous Oxfam. There is a permanent welfare officer in charge, sponsored by the Rowntree Trust. His activities are multifarious; he took me to a meeting of the Mothers' Union, 32 strong and led by Mrs. Mogwe, wife of the Education Officer, Archie Mogwe. He also runs a youth club, which provides facilities for weight-lifting and other therapeutic activities but is enjoyed more than anything for the debates which it holds. (Africans enjoy debating as the British enjoy football.) There is also a nursery school for children up to the age of six.

The shelves of the library at Serowe are well stocked with books; but my heart always sank when I went into a Bechuanaland library. There was so much goodwill and so little value for it. A solid base of textbooks, reference-books and useful books of general interest makes a good beginning; but beyond that there are arid stretches of novels, biographies and so on, generously

presented by well-meaning but short-sighted folk, that cannot have any significant impact on more than a tiny minority of their readers. The only occupant of the library at Serowe when I visited it was a three-inch green locust that perched impassively on the back of a chair. There was as much nourishment for that insect there as there was for the average Mongwato student.

Serowe's handicap in development will spring from its origin as a native 'village'. Great areas of it still consist of a huddle of huts put down in no particular design; and this is bound to present difficulties when such services as refuse collection, water supply – even, in the foreseeable future, electricity – have to be laid on. New housing is going up in a rather more orderly pattern, but for a long time Serowe, like London, will remain the victim of its higgledy-piggledy layout, unless some Batswana Haussmann arises who will replan it ruthlessly.

At the moment there are no funds for such luxuries. Classrooms alone – 250 required, according to current estimates – will mop up anything in the way of a surplus for as long as anyone can see.

One additional amenity is the new hotel just built on the outskirts of the town. For this the tribe put up R10,000 and Castle Breweries in Rhodesia have made a loan of R18,000. The great Khama campaigned for many years against the liquor trade, and Bamangwato territory was 'dry' in his day, as indeed it continued to be until the end of Tshekedi's régime. *Tempora mutantur*, as they say at Moeng College, *nos et mutamur in illis*.

The District Commissioner's house at Serowe was alleged to be haunted. In one of the bedrooms a Bushman girl was said to appear and walk about the bed, though being a Bushman, she offered no harm to the occupant. No one in his senses would take magic in Africa anything but seriously, and a former District Commissioner got the Bishop of Matabeleland to exorcise the ghost. With true Bushman courtesy, she has not visited the house since.

There is another magical belief in the neighbourhood, and that is that one of the hills doesn't like to be pointed at. I asked the District Commissioner to indicate which hill it was, but from where we were sitting it could not be seen; and this no doubt saved him from a certain measure of ill luck. Whether you can point it out on a map without arousing its resentment is something that has not yet been put to the test.

The Bangwaketse

Like the Bamangwato, the Bangwaketse separated from the Bakwena in the middle of the eighteenth century. Their subsequent history is the usual round of warfare with neighbouring tribes and peoples – the Matabele once drove them as far west as Ghanzi. There were boundary disputes and disputes about succession to the chieftainship. At one time the tribe was split into two, one half at Kgwakgwe, one at Diphawana (both in the neighbourhood of Kanye), their respective chiefs being Senthufe, whose claim to the chieftainship was exiguous, and Gaseitsiwe, who was the legitimate heir.

Naturally they soon came to blows, and Gaseitsiwe, who won, reunited the tribe. Typically in his time, he was an enlightened ruler and encouraged missionaries and traders to visit the tribe. Like Khama, he was anxious to accept British protection; also like Khama, he offered land to be settled by British immigrants, an offer that was not taken up.

Gaseitsiwe's son was Bathoen I, who succeeded in 1889. Thereafter only one succession dispute took place, when a dissident group under a rogue London Missionary Society preacher tried to set up Bathoen's half-brother Kwnaetsile in his place. Bathoen banished the preacher from his capital, and the movement duly faded out.

Bathoen abolished initiation ceremonies and encouraged Christianity and education. He died in 1910 and was followed by his son Seepapitso, an even more progressive ruler who was assassinated by a younger brother after a family quarrel after only six years of rule. His heir, the young Bathoen, was eight years old. A series of rather unsatisfactory regencies followed that culminated in four years under Tsosa, who was not only mad but also given to helping himself from the tribal treasury. Bathoen's widow, a daughter of the great Sechele, then took over and rapidly put things in order; but she died after only a year in office. She was succeeded by her daughter, who held the reins until she reckoned her young nephew Bathoen was ready to take over.

Bathoen II, the present chief of the tribe, was 20 when he began to rule. From the first, he set the formidable pace he has maintained ever since. When he was 25 he joined with Tshekedi in his action against the government. Until the new constitution

began to operate in 1965, he was a member both of the Legislative Council and the Executive Council, and he sat on the board of Bechuanaland Protectorate Abattoirs, Ltd. (as it was then), the most important industry in the country. The files on the desk in his office are piled feet high. A copy of Debrett's *Baronetage, Knightage and Companionship* stands among his books: he is a Companion of the Order of the British Empire.

The first time I went to see Chief Bathoen he was in session with his *kgotla*. The well-worn brown trilby hat and round glasses conspired together to conceal the magnitude of his personality as he sat beneath a great spreading tree at the head of half a hundred of his tribesmen deployed in a tight crescent in front of him. When he spoke, though, there were the unmistakable accents of authority in his voice and the unmistakable marks of deference in his hearers. While he heard his case I waited in the Tribal Secretary's office, where files were piled as high as on the chief's desk and official books and papers covered every inch of available space. Half hidden behind them was a printed notice that began:

TUBERCULOSIS
THIS IS THE DISEASE THAT MAKES
YOU COUGH AND COUGH AND DIE

Tuberculosis is still a scourge of the Africans in southern Africa.

The Tribal Secretary, Mr. Bome, brought me the Visitor's Book to sign. The current volume was opened in 1952 and contains innumerable signatures from visitors from Britain and the USA. 'It is a symbol of the close contact between Bechuanaland and Britain,' said Mr. Bome, rather wistfully, 'which I hope will remain for a long time.'

The chief talked with enthusiasm about almost every subject I brought up except the new constitution, which at that time had not yet come into force. His feeling was that to restrict the chiefs to membership of a House whose functions touch only native law and custom is to deprive them of their potential role in the government of the country. He also felt, as indeed everyone feels but with widely varying degrees of approval, that the strengthening of local government on modern lines is bound to undermine the chief's authority. As they are not allowed to run

for seats in the Legislative Assembly, their functions are fated to dwindle until they exercise a mere fraction of their former power.

On all other topics Chief Bathoen spoke with energy and far-sightedness. Like everyone else, he wanted more money for education; already, he told me, so many children were being taught in so few classrooms that teachers were working double shifts. He wanted a full-time welfare officer like the one at Serowe to inaugurate and supervise welfare activities. He is very keen on the agricultural extension services, and under his excellent Agricultural Officer, Mr. H. D. Going, the Bangwaketse have some remarkable results to show, which I describe in more detail in Chapter 11. He is an enthusiastic cattleman, and showed me photographs of Brahman cattle from Texas, which he proposes to try out.

When next I visited him he was, very typically, supervising the work of the bricklayers building his new council chamber, opened later that year. His qualifications as a bricklayer are probably less than those of Sir Winston Churchill, but his qualifications as a 'prod', to use Sir Winston's word, are clearly well developed. When he had finished with the bricklayers he went on to the contractors' men who were about to drill their way through an intrusive piece of rock and dealt with them. Another facet of his polymath liveliness shows when he plays the piano for the services at the big London Missionary Society church at Kanye, and even trains the choir.

He drove with us to the church, a tremendously solid piece of work with walls of pinkish stone two feet thick. It stands at the summit of a steep hill up whose slopes all the building material had to be brought by hand. In these circumstances there is something very remarkable about the achievement recorded in a tablet in the side of the building: work on the church began on 27 September 1894 and the opening service was celebrated on 1 January 1895.

Driving with Chief Bathoen was fun. He was always delighted to hop up into the front of the Land-Rover even if it meant sitting three abreast. Tribesmen who saw us coming would wave us down hoping for a lift and then, in horrified recognition of their chief, turn the movement into a deep bow or genuflection.

Kanye is a big, sprawling metropolis that, like all the larger

native 'villages', has grown up more or less haphazard until lately. Its population is about 34,000 (there are some 71,000 Bangwaketse altogether), and it is reasonably well endowed with modern amenities. There is a large hospital, run by the Seventh Day Adventists, and a good secondary school run under tribal auspices but now included in the government's centralised education plan. It has a useful welfare hall; the signs of its versatility were apparent all over when I went in - a blackboard bearing a recipe for Swiss Roll, a climbing-rope for the keep-fit enthusiasts, equipment for teas and table tennis and billiards.

As Mr. Sinombe and I prepared to leave Kanye after our last visit, his car gave a sudden convulsive jerk and all its lights went out. There was no moon that night, and, for the first time since I came to Bechuanaland, it was beginning to rain. The darkness was absolute, even at the top of populous Kanye Hill.

Out of the murk there appeared two Bangwaketse youths, dressed in keen Carnaby Street fashion, and we hailed them. Mr. McIntyre, they said, he'll help you. One of them produced a torch and led us to the house of an Indian storekeeper a hundred yards away.

The Indian invited us in and offered us his telephone, and Mr. McIntyre, who had certainly never heard of us before, agreed at once to come to our rescue. The storekeeper then got his van out of the garage and drove us back to the Land-Rover, where Mr. McIntyre, in a large American car, joined us five minutes later. He fiddled with something in the inside of our bonnet and got the engine running again - though, as he confessed, he didn't exactly know why. He then offered to stay behind us on the road for the first mile or two of our way in case we should break down again.

It was, I felt, an example of how a properly integrated multi-racial society ought to work; that is to say, it worked exactly as if no racial or linguistic differences existed between us at all.

8. THE BAKGATLA — BATLOKWA AND BAMALETE — BAROLONG

The Bakgatla

Wild rider with hounds afoot
In the glare of African day,
And the bay reined tight,
Let him gallop, gallop, the bay!
He will not shake you off
Nor will your people shake you
When you give them a loose rein,
Your people who love and make you
Into what they cannot explain:
Who know and will never mistake you.

THE subject of the poem from which these lines come is Chief Linchwe II of the Bakgatla, and the writer of the poem is Naomi Mitchison. Not many African chiefs have had poems indited to them by reputable English writers; Chief Linchwe has had half a dozen, though mostly unpublished.

The young Chief rides through the forest,
Thinking of boreholes,
Thinking of schools, thinking of money, of land use,
How best to make it plain
In the slow workings of the Kgotla
For those who need rain.

Lady Mitchison, as she is now, is not a writer to go overboard unless her subject is of some special interest. She has found the Bakgatla of such interest that she has become an adopted member of the tribe: 'we Bakgatla', she says when discussing tribal problems.

She was not in Mochudi (the Bakgatla capital) when I called there, however. I went first to see the District Commissioner in his office and found that my appointment to see the chief had disappeared somewhere along the road. 'But he's in his office,' said the District Commissioner. 'I'm sure he'll be able to give you some time.'

He was standing in front of his office, actually, when we drove up, and I didn't realise at first that this was the chief. I suppose chiefs come in all guises, like monarchs and members of Parliament; but I didn't expect the elegant and strikingly handsome young man who greeted us. He wore a dark-coloured suit of impeccable cut, with a dove-grey waistcoat, a white shirt and a striped club tie.

The same ambience was evident in his office. We might have been in the managing director's office of a small, prosperous company. The chief sat at a polished table without many of the trammels of routine on it, and offered cigarettes from a silver box.

What I wanted from him particularly was his views on the House of Chiefs, the most contentious item in the current Bechuana constitution. Like most of the other chiefs at the time, he was opposed to it in principle, as he thought it would preclude the chiefs from any participation in the real affairs of the country. On the other hand he did not favour the proposal made by Chief Bathoen that chiefs should be allowed to abdicate their chieftainship and sit in the Lower House as private citizens. Their chiefs still mean very much to the tribes, and whether they went through a form of abdication or not, they would still be regarded as chiefs by the mass of the people. The Bakgatla have a very strong sense of tribal loyalty, and any precipitate step towards breaking up the traditional shape of tribal administration might be harmful.

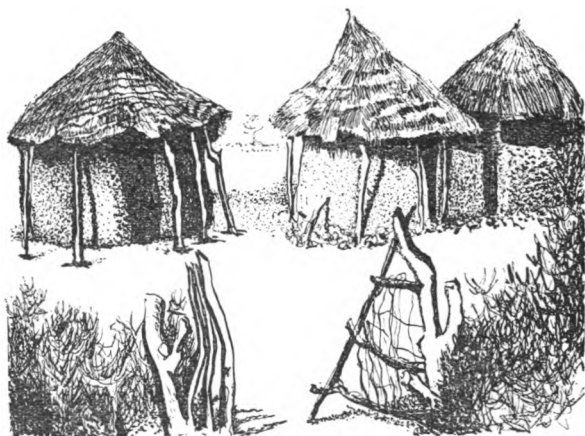
I asked Chief Linchwe what alternative he had to propose and he gave me what I can only describe as an enigmatic smile. 'What would you suggest?' he asked.

Despite his youth - he is still under 30, and looks about 20 - Chief Linchwe is impressive. He had his education in Britain but is not convinced that this is necessarily the proper way for African chiefs to be educated. 'I've been in Germany, France, Holland and Switzerland,' he said, 'but never any of the new African states.' Later he made a significant remark. 'If the Europeans had not destroyed our culture', he observed, 'we should have evolved a significant culture of our own.' Among the papers the Chief reads regularly are the *New Statesman* and the *Guardian*.

There was a bit of dynastic derangement in the generations that preceded Chief Linchwe. Like so many of the Tswana tribes,

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the Bakgatla had known a good deal of fragmentation before finally coming to rest in their present home between the Bakwena and the Bamangwato, and there are various Bakgatla offshoots scattered about the Transvaal. The Bechuanaland Bakgatla are strictly speaking the Bakgatla-Kgafela (Chief Linchwe's name is Linchwe Kgafela, but the tribe is not named for him, nor for his grandfather, but for his great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, the second son of Matshego, who was the great-great-great-great-grandson of Melekeleke, the founder of the tribe). Chief Kgamanyane, who died in 1874, had 30 wives or so and a vast number of sons, from among whom Linchwe I was ultimately recognised as the legitimate successor. He ruled the tribe from 1875 to 1924, during which time they were perpetually in a sporadic state of warfare with someone or other.



Village huts near Tati Town

There was a long guerilla conflict with the Bakwena; the Bakwena insisted that the Bakgatla should pay them tribute for the privilege of having settled around Mochudi, which they did when the persecutions of the Boers drove them from the Transvaal; and the Bakgatla were accused by the Bakwena of interfering with their cattle-posts. Finally a typically British solution was proposed; Linchwe could move out of Mochudi into the Transvaal, or stay where he was and become a vassal of the Bakwena. Linchwe, a man of strong will, decided to do neither. It was not until 1899 that the Bakgatla reserve was finally delimited and the tribe recognised as truly independent.

Linchwe, however, was well aware that he had potential subjects in the Transvaal, and he applied to the Transvaal Government for recognition as their *de facto* chief. Although this application was slapped down, he was permitted to nominate a representative to exercise his chiefly authority over the Transvaal Bakgatla. This arrangement is still in force.

Linchwe's eldest son died of influenza in 1918, and his second son Isang governed for him. Linchwe died in 1924. He had had, by and large, a thoroughly beneficent reign, had united the tribe, and, having been converted to Christianity in 1892, introduced many useful reforms.

Isang continued to rule after Linchwe died, Linchwe's grandson Molefi being a minor. He was a stern but progressive ruler. He was particularly keen on education, and founded schools right and left without having paid enough consideration as to how they were to be maintained. The result of that today is that the Bakgatla have the best educational record in Bechuanaland — 4,500 out of a possible 5,500 children go to school. On the other hand, this involves allocating a totally unrealistic 71 per cent of the tribal revenue to education, a situation inherently unstable, even though the Bakgatla have also the best taxpaying record in Bechuanaland.

Isang's constant demands for revenue for public services finally lost him the support of his people, and Molefi was installed as chief at the age of 20. This did not turn out at all well; Molefi and Isang were openly on bad terms and their quarrels led to Isang's banishment from Mochudi for a time. He died in 1941; but five years before that Molefi had been suspended from the chieftainship and himself banished.

His younger brother Mmusi was installed as acting chief, but there were still adherents to Molefi's faction in the tribe, and they formed themselves into a band called the Ipelegeng pledged to see Molefi back in power. The Ipelegeng were by no means a hole-and-corner affair; they had considerable prestige within the tribe and numbered among their members Molefi's mother and his uncle Bakgatla; but they were naturally a disturbing influence, and in order to avoid the stigma of being thought of as a lot of political agitators they turned themselves into a new religious denomination and called themselves the Zionists.

During the war, both Molefi and Mmusi served with the

African Pioneer Corps (Molefi became an RSM, a distinction he shared with two other notables, Chief Kgari of the Bakwena, and Mr. Matante of the BPP) and the tribe was governed by a council presided over by Bakgatla. It was therefore not very surprising that with the Ipelegeng so well represented at court, Molefi should have been happily reinstated as chief in 1945. The political side of the Ipelegeng, having achieved its object, then dwindled into a kind of Old Comrades' Association; but the religious side goes on and has spread to other tribes, somewhat to the discomfiture of the Dutch Reformed Church (who formerly had a virtual monopoly in Bakgatla country) and other missions.

Linchwe II is Molefi's son. He has 32,000 subjects, 18,000 of them in Mochudi. To be leading a loyal tribe at such a moment in African history places him in an enviable situation:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.

The Batlokwa and the Bamalete

Immediately south of the Bakgatla country is the territory of the Batlokwa, a small offshoot (3,711 at the last count) of a large tribe, the Bahurutse (see p. 78), believed to have been the leaders of the last and most numerous migration from East Africa. They left the main part of the tribe about two hundred years ago at a place called Tlokwe, thus providing an exception to the almost universal rule that tribes take their names from their leaders.

It has already been related how Chief Gaborone of the Batlokwa moved his followers into the Bakwena country in 1884 and how the Bakwena, having at first given them permission to stay there, later offered their land to the British South Africa Company (see p. 51). When Chief Gaborone died, this cession, which had been postponed out of consideration for the chief, should have come into operation; but instead, the land was transferred to the High Commissioner and became the Batlokwa Reserve. It is a small tract of land, less than 70 square miles in area – too small really for the tribe's comfort, and inadequately

supplied with water. It is surrounded on all sides by the Crown land of the Gaberones Block, so there is no possibility of the territory being enlarged, as has been done elsewhere, by purchasing land from a neighbouring tribe.

The Bechuanaland Government has done a good deal to improve the situation of the Batlokwa, but there is still much to be done.

The Batlokwa are administered by the District Commissioner at Gaberones. Their current chief is Chief Kgosi Kgosi. The word *kgosi* in Setswana means chief, so there is not much doubt about Chief Kgosi Kgosi's status.

Southward again, we come to the country of the Bamalete.

The Bamalete are a small tribe (14,000 strong) whose origin is not Tswana at all but Ndebele. However, they have lived for a long time now in a purely Tswana ambience, and they have become as it were a pseudo-Tswana people. Like every tribe in those parts, they lived a peripatetic existence for many years until in 1875 they settled at Ramoutsa, where they are today. They had not been there long before Chief Gaseitsiwe of the Bangwaketse claimed that the country around Ramoutsa belonged to him, and a ceaseless conflict between the two tribes ensued.

An end was put to this state of affairs in 1885, when the Government of the Transvaal evinced an interest in the Bamalete and sent a British officer to their chief, Mokgosi, to find out what was going on. This officer's rather dictatorial communication to the chief was as follows: if the Bamalete wanted to keep the grazing land they were occupying in the Transvaal, then they must leave Bechuanaland altogether and consider themselves Transvaal subjects. On the other hand, if they wanted to stay under British protection, they must give up their land in the Transvaal and become vassals of Chief Gaseitsiwe. Gaseitsiwe was to allow them to occupy a reasonable area of land in exchange for an annual rental of ten head of cattle.

The Bamalete remained in this situation for a further ten years; then in 1895 Sir Sidney Shippard persuaded the unhappy Chief Ikaneng of the Bamalete to hand over his land to the British South Africa Company. In order to do this he had to reverse the previous decision and allow that the Bamalete were not after all subjects of the Bangwaketse but were an independent

tribe. Thus eventually good came of evil; for after the failure of the Jameson Raid the cession of this land to the company was cancelled. So the Bamalete at once gained their independence of the company and of the Bangwaketse.

They have lived an uneventful life since then on their pocket-sized territory, roughly 40 miles square. Like the Batlokwa they find this living-space a bit small for them. In 1917 they enlarged it by simply buying 3,000 morgen of land from the Bangwaketse.

The Barolong

The Barolong are one of the most fragmented peoples of that part of Africa. When their powerful chief Tau died in 1760, the tribe divided into four sections owing allegiance to the chief's four sons. (There were in fact five sons, whose names were Rratlou, Tshidi, Seleka, Rrapulana and Makgotla; but Makgotla, though he was a peacemaker by nature, was killed fighting for his brother Tshidi.)

The main body of the Barolong in Bechuanaland are the Tshidi-Barolong. They live in some 400 square miles on what you might call the bottom right hand corner of the country. The Rratlou-Barolong no longer live in Bechuanaland; the Seleka-Barolong have an outcrop around Francistown, the Rrapulana-Barolong, like the Rratlou, are in the Republic of South Africa.

But besides these four main divisions of the tribe, the Barolong have also brought forth the Tloung and the Kubung, who also live in South Africa, and the Kaa, who have settlements among the Bakgatla, the Bamangwato and the Bakwena.

The Tshidi-Barolong are the ones in which we are principally interested. At the end of the nineteenth century, they were settled around Mafeking, if settled is a word that can be used to describe their existence. As early as 1852 they were driven out of their country by the Boers and had to take refuge with the Bangwaketse at Moshaneng. Twenty years later they moved back, but soon found themselves in conflict with the Rrapulana and Rratlou sept; and this gave the opportunity for the Boer separatists who were looking for a handy place to establish an independent republic to step in and annexe a great part of their land for inclusion in the Republic of Goshen.

The British came to their rescue, the Republic of Goshen was overthrown, and the Barolong were allowed to live in peace until in 1895 they were persuaded, like the Bamalete, to surrender that part of their territory that lay within the Bechuanaland border to the chartered company. As we have seen, this arrangement did not last long – ironically enough, it was from Barolong country, at Pitsane, that the ill-fated Jameson Raid set out.

Today the international boundary still passes through the country of the Barolong, and their chief, Mokgosi, lives on the South African side of it. The Bechuanaland Barolong number over 10,000.

The Barolong have an interesting system of land tenure which is quite different from that of other Tswana peoples. It was originated by Chief Montshiwa, who led the tribe through their troublous times in the eighties and nineties. He believed, perhaps optimistically, that if his people were given proper title to their lands on the European pattern this would prevent the Europeans from ever coming in and taking it from them. At first the British would not play, on the ground that the holders of the farms might dispose of them outside the tribe, and in any case weren't good enough farmers.

Later, however, when the Barolong country was enlarged by the addition of some Bangwaketse land between Ramathlabama and Korwe, along the bank of the Molopo, the question was raised again, and this time it was agreed to on condition that the titles to the lands were made suitably restrictive.

Chief Montshiwa accordingly had his country surveyed and divided into farms of 3,000 morgen apiece which were allotted to members of the tribe. The tenants were to hold the land for their lifetime at an annual rent of £1 10s., and would forfeit it if they were absent for more than a year. The land could be transferred to another member of the tribe, and on his death it was to revert to the chief. In practice the chief usually re-grants it to whomever would be the heir.

The mass of the people live on these farms exactly as they would in a normal tribal environment, only with certain special obligations towards their 'landlords'. But now a new factor has arisen, in that progressive farmers, not among the grantees of tribal farms, are tending to cultivate bigger and better farmsteads. Modern Barolong farming is described on page 93.

9. THE BATAWANA AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS—THE KALAKA —AND OTHERS

The Batawana and their Neighbours

THE Batawana, who live in and around the Ngamiland swamps, are an offshoot of the Bamangwato; they left their parent tribe at the end of the eighteenth century. Tawana was one of the numerous sons of Mathiba, chief of the Bamangwato; he was born before Khama (who ultimately succeeded him as Khama I) but his mother was Mathiba's third wife, while Khama's mother was his first. This made Khama the legitimate heir in the eyes of the tribe, and Tawana moved away to the west. There he was at once joined by his father, whose favourite son he was.

Mathiba's end was sad. He left Tawana's country, either because Tawana drove him away or because he contracted malaria in the swamps, and went to live with the Bakwena. After a while, however, the Bakwena got tired of him and made it clear that he was no longer *persona grata* with them. Mathiba tried to return to Khama, but Khama would have none of him, and Mathiba, weary of life in the wilderness, killed himself.

There was already a numerous tribe living in Ngamiland when the Batawana moved in, the Bayei (also known as the Bakoba). Although in some areas the Bayei outnumber the Batawana by a considerable margin, the Batawana, whose total numbers are over 42,000, have managed to maintain their ascendancy without trouble. Their present chief is Letsholathebe, who succeeded as an infant in 1946, his father having been killed in a motor accident. While Chief Letsholathebe was away getting the European education that is usually deemed suitable in such cases, the tribe were ruled by his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Pulane Seeco. The choice was the tribe's, and it turned out a wise one. Chief Letsholathebe was installed in December 1964.

Also living in the region are some 5,000 'Damara'. The

Damara is a cover-label for the Herero and Mbanderu who fled into the Protectorate from Damaraland in South-West Africa, where they had made an insurrection against the Germans that was put down with merciless force. As a result, the whole tribal organisation of the Herero was destroyed. They are a pastoral people.

There are also several thousand Masarwa, Bushmen or Bushmen of mixed descent, who have settled for a more sedentary life away from their people; a primitive riverine tribe called the Mbukushu who inhabit the Okavango swamps in the north-west corner of the country, about 4,000 strong; and isolated outposts of several other tribes.

The Kalaka

The African population of the Tati district belong mostly to the Kalaka, known also as the Kalanga. (Kalanga is in fact their own name for themselves; but Kalaka is the Setswana form of the word and therefore the variant most commonly encountered.) They are not a Tswana people, but stem from the Shona of Rhodesia; however, their way of living has become Tswanaised as the result of long contact. They do not have the strong tribal loyalty of the Tswana tribes, though, and have no paramount chief or centralised tribal organisation. Instead, they are divided into small communities under separate headmen. There are five of these headmen in the Tati Concession, and a Subordinate African Authority in Francistown.

There are also numbers of Makalaka living with the Tswana tribes, mostly among the Bamangwato.

And Others

The Kgalagadi, whose name is a more sophisticated version of the familiar Kalahari, represent the first of the Sotho immigrants into southern Africa from the north and east. They settled originally in the fertile east part of the country, but have gradually been pushed into the desert, on whose fringes they now live. They have intermingled a good deal with the Bushmen and do not on the whole exhibit a high standard of culture at the moment.

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The Bahurutse are the descendants of the last great migration. They have undergone a good deal of tribal fragmentation, but one of their offshoots, the Bakhurutse, is settled in the region north-west of Francistown. There are other detached bodies of Bahurutse living among the Bangwaketse and the Bakwena, but they have no tribal territory of their own. The majority of the tribe now lives in the Transvaal.

I have dealt with the Bushmen in the chapter on the Kalahari desert (pp. 32-44).

10. THE INDISPENSABLE CATTLE

THE livestock and dairy industries contribute nearly 90 per cent of the value of Bechuanaland's exports and employ, wholly or partly, some 98 per cent of the population. Almost everyone in Bechuanaland is a cattle owner; cattle form a handy repository for wealth and except among the more sophisticated serve as a kind of walking bank account.

The cattle commonly seen are ordinary African scrub cattle; some Afrikanders have been introduced and experiments are now going on with Brahmans.

The Veterinary Department and the Agricultural Department share government responsibility for the welfare of the livestock industry. Basically it is the concern of the Veterinary Department, but it was decided to hand over extension work in animal husbandry to the Agricultural Department – not because of their superior knowledge of animal husbandry, but because of their long and successful experience in extension work. The Veterinary Department remains in charge of control of disease and nutritional deficiencies, of castration campaigns and of control over the importation of stock. The African assistant stock-inspectors are trained by the Veterinary Department at a school at Ramathlabama. There is a research laboratory here as well, which is investigating neo-natal mortality in cattle and the conditions that affect reproduction rates.

Extension work in animal husbandry is only just beginning to get into its stride. Meanwhile Livestock Industry Development Teams, consisting of a district officer, a senior tribal representative and a number of grazing control guards, are out in the field preparing the tribesmen for the arrival of the extension workers when local opinion is ready for them. These teams have other important functions too, notably in connection with boreholes, and this is as good a place as any to explain them.

Standing water is a scarcity in Bechuanaland, and in many places water has to be obtained from boreholes. Until lately, the government provided and maintained boreholes in the tribal territories, which is as good as paying a subsidy to the cattle

owners. To pass these costs on to the cattle owners, and at the same time to encourage initiative among them, loans are now offered to individuals or syndicates who would like to develop watering points of their own – either boreholes or dams – in land at present unoccupied. It is the job of the Development Teams to explain how this policy works, to delineate new areas suitable for ranching development, and in general to gather information. When the new areas have been opened up, the teams stay there with two principal tasks: to administer the boreholes repayment scheme; and to ensure that the number of cattle using each watering point is within its capacity.

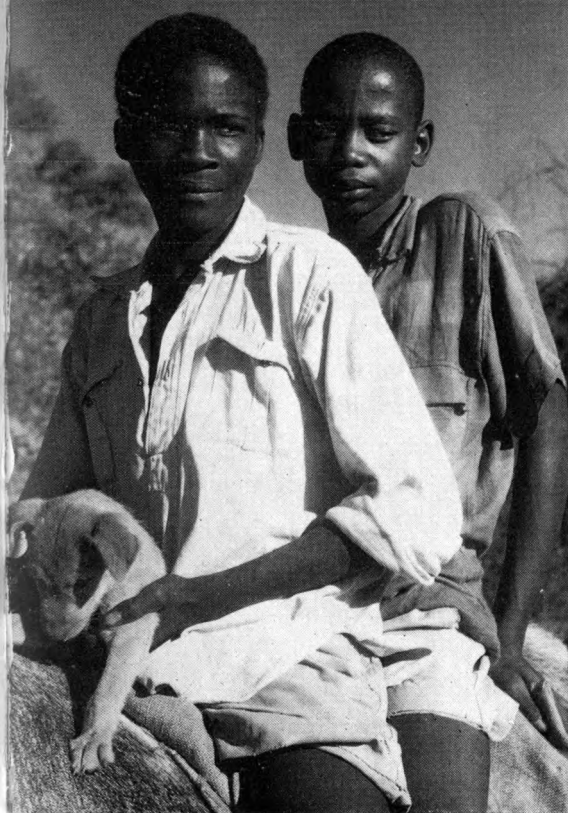
There is not unlimited grazing land in the tribal territories, and in any case the characteristic form of land tenure among the Tswana does not allow ownership of land by individuals. There is, however, much good potential ranching country in the Crown lands, and land settlement schemes are under consideration for the areas in the Crown lands adjacent to the tribal territories. One area in which work is going forward is between the Molopo settlements and the southern boundary of the Bangwaketse country; an aerial magnetometer survey has been made, and test drillings and surveys are in progress.

These schemes require trained cattle-guards and stock inspectors, and the school at Ramathlabama is providing these from the graduates on its short courses. There are up to 20 students on each course. They live in comfortable 'pre-fabs' and do their own cooking and cleaning as they will have to do when they are out in the field.

* * *

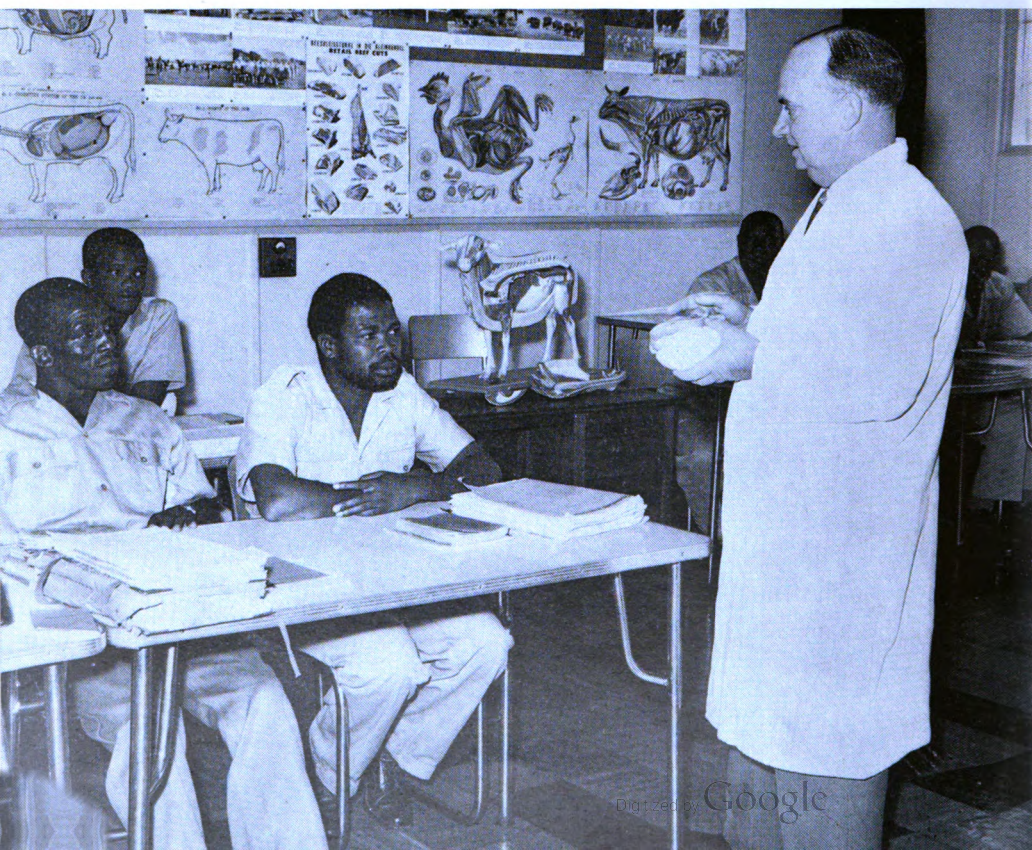
One of the most important responsibilities of the Veterinary Department is the control of foot-and-mouth disease. This is effected by means of vast quarantine fences dividing the country into zones. As soon as an outbreak is reported in any zone, all movement of cattle within that zone is stopped and all the cattle vaccinated. This vaccination is free and compulsory. At the same time the patrolling of the quarantine fence is intensified to make absolutely sure that there is no movement of cattle across it. The owners of cattle co-operate well, for they realise that they are not going to be allowed to shift their stock until 100 per cent immunity has been achieved.

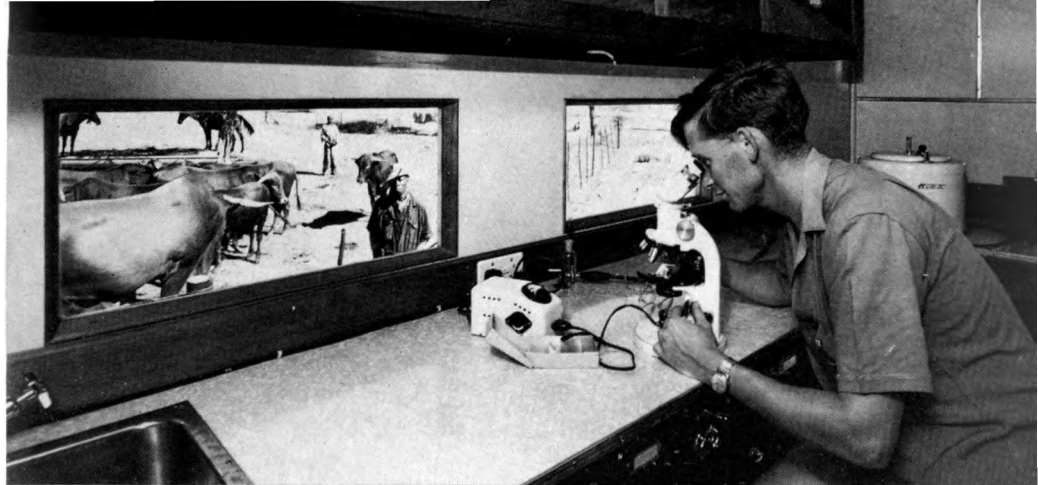
An unhappy side-effect of the fences is that they cut across the



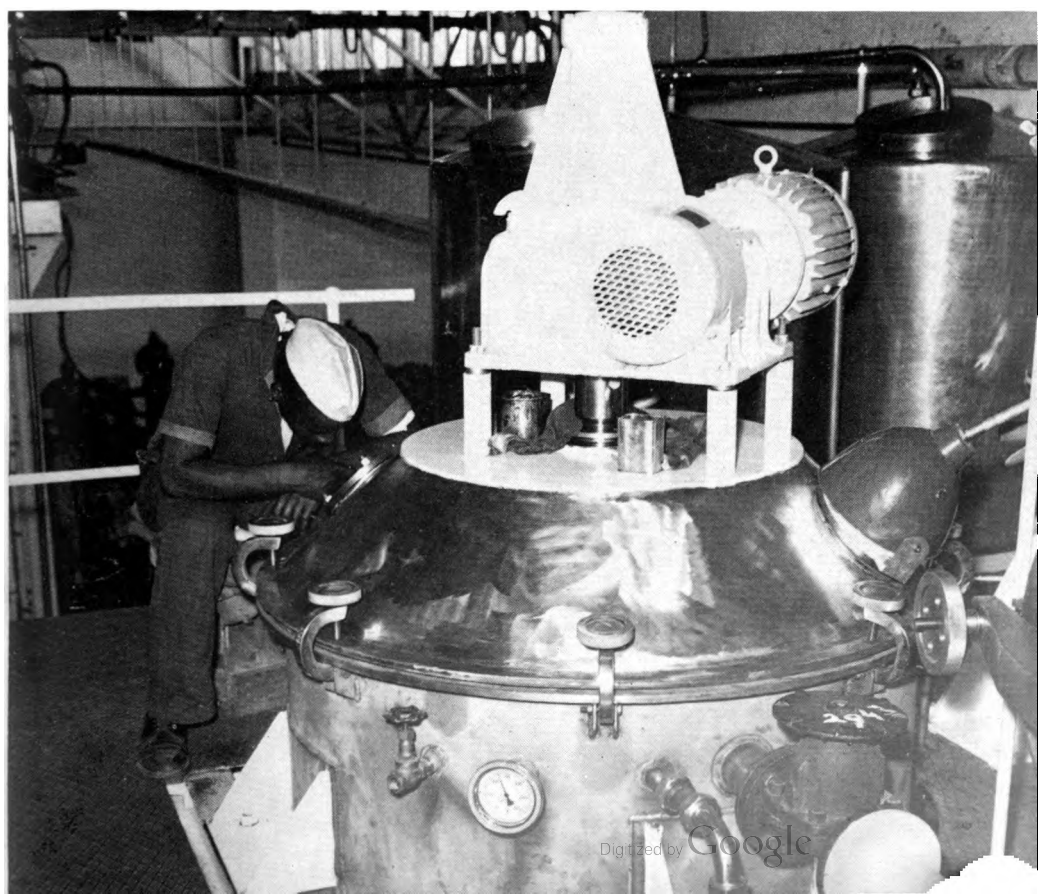
Bechuanaland has many young people: over 40 per cent are under 14 years old. Lads like those on the donkey, *left*, are an everyday sight. *Below*: performers in the Moeng College band.







Cattle are the backbone of the economy, but recent successive droughts have sadly depleted them. *Left, above*: part of a breeding herd fostered to improve stock; *below*: the Ramathlabama Veterinary School trains stock inspectors and others. *Above*: this mobile veterinary laboratory brings scientific diagnosis to the most remote areas. *Below*: beef extract in the making at the canning factory, Lobatsi.







Testimony of drought. *Above, left*: the height and columns of this bridge at Francistown indicate the volume of water expected in normal years; *right*: drinking water drawn from the bed of the Tati river. Another problem, erosion, *below, left*. Many Batswana men have to seek work outside their country: *below, right*, arriving home from mining in South Africa.





There is an insatiable demand for education. *Above*: Form III at Seepapitso Secondary School, Kanye. *Below*: Moeng College, the co-educational secondary boarding school founded by Tshekedi Khama.





Above: learning to make relief maps at the government teachers' training college, Lobatsi, built with the aid of British funds. Below: pupil nurses attend an operation at Jubilee Hospital, Francistown.





Despite adverse conditions work goes ahead on improvements. Cotton, now successfully grown by farmers, is experimented with at the Mahalapye station, *above, left*, and sorghum pollination is being controlled in the field, *right*. Tsetse fly control point, *below*.



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traditional migration routes of the game. The wildebeeste, confronted by a barrier across their accustomed track, will run up and down it until they die of starvation and exhaustion. 'The vultures get so full', I was told, 'that they stop bothering about them.'

The production of foot-and-mouth vaccine under field conditions was the subject of an important breakthrough by a team from the Veterinary Department working at Makalamabedi, on the Botletle river.

The scientist responsible for this was Dr. G. H. Townsend, and his researches were carried on at an isolated house in the middle of a cleared area of bush, with a truck, a wireless station and an airstrip to provide communication with the world. There is a complete technical description of Dr. Townsend's process in the *Journal of the South African Veterinary Medical Association* for March 1964.

The vaccine prepared at Makalamabedi is a 'killed' vaccine. Vaccines may contain live or dead virus, and the requirement in a killed vaccine is to kill the reproductive, but not the immunogenic, part of the protein of the virus. The virus can be got to grow in non-cloven-hoof hosts not usually susceptible to foot-and-mouth, such as mice, guinea-pigs and duck eggs; having become adapted to its new host, it won't continue to live in cattle, but will bestow immunity longer than 'dead' vaccines will.

Supplies of vaccine for Bechuanaland are usually obtained from Pirbright (England); but when Pirbright was unable to supply it, it was decided to investigate the possibility of making it locally under field conditions. The process arrived at has turned out to be cheap and quick and to have the advantage of involving a local strain of the disease (South African type 3).

The virus source is grown in the skin of foetal calves or in foetal kidneys. (Elsewhere this is generally done in the tongues of cattle.) It is kept in a 'witch's brew', to use Dr. Townsend's term for it, of peptone and other ingredients for twenty hours, while oxygen is bubbled through. During this process the virus multiplies a hundred times. It is then diluted to one millionth of its original strength and blended with other constituents – formalin and glycerin to inhibit the growth of stray bacteria, chloroform to kill any bacteria that may have survived other onslaughts,

and an adjuvant, aluminium hydroxide, that enhances the value of the vaccine in a way not clear to the layman.

All this has to be done under exacting conditions of temperature and so on. Ice, a necessity here and not a mere adjuvant for beer, comes in insulated boxes by road from Bulawayo. One five-ton truckload lasts a week.

* * *

In Ngamiland many cattle are in danger of infection from the tsetse fly. A tsetse fly control officer is stationed at Maun; much valuable work was done there by Mr. Ivor Lewis, who held this job for 11 years, until he decided that more than 11 years in Maun were more than any man should be asked to bear. He was not leaving his work uncompleted, however, and it is from his important report that most of the following information is extracted.

The tsetse belt in Bechuanaland is confined to the Okavango and Chobe swamps. The Okavango rises in Angola and flows into Bechuanaland at its north-west corner, whereupon it floods into a great swampy delta 7,000 miles in area, its base extending from the Mababe Depression in the east to Lake Ngami in the west. The Chobe swamps are similar but smaller. Both areas offer an ideal habitat for the tsetse, in patches inside the flooded areas and in a band of vegetation varying in width from three to 30 miles around the edges.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the extent of the fly-belt in Bechuanaland was not much different from what it is today. Then came the rinderpest, with its great destruction of the beasts on which the tsetse lived, and the tsetse retreated to a few small pockets. But once the rinderpest was checked, the flies rapidly recovered their lost dominions; between 1922 and 1942 they returned to roughly 3,000 square miles, and in the twenty years after that they reoccupied 6,500 square miles more. This remarkable rate of expansion is attributed to the great increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The aim set at present is to contain the fly-belt. It is hardly possible at the moment to reduce it; the problem is still at crisis level. The tsetse – *Glossina morsitans morsitans* Westw. is its name, though beyond Kazungula, in the Zambesi belt, a different subspecies is met – can clear a barrier three miles wide. The type of bush which the fly prefers is ascertained, and where this forms

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a reasonably low proportion of the bush cover, selective clearing is done. Actually the proportion may be anything from 3 to 80 per cent of the bush; where the percentage is too high to allow for discriminative clearing of this kind, good results have been obtained by the use of insecticides.

Insecticide spraying has, alas, its usual side-effect; where it has been used there have been numbers of dead birds found afterwards. Still, Africa is a big continent; the birds will return; and the fight against the tsetse is vital.

Once the belt has been contained, then is the time to start on reducing it. The Naragha Valley, south-west of Maun, that once had to be totally evacuated, has now been reclaimed, and an ambitious agricultural programme is planned for it. Some progress has also been made at Nokaneng, on the west side of the Okavango delta, where the advance had been most serious.

'We're now just about at the turn of the tide,' Mr. Lewis told me. Work goes on energetically at clearing the bush cover in the barriers; the initials TFC, which formerly stood for 'Tsetse Fly Control', are now alleged to denote 'Tree Felling Corporation'. A start has been made at clearing the papyrus in the swamps at Shakawe, in the north-west corner of the Okavango swamp, and plans have been laid for the reclamation of valuable ranching and mixed farming country south of Tsau and in the Nokaneng-Gomare flood plain, from which some 25,000 cattle have had to be evacuated in the last twenty-five years.

This movement of cattle has naturally caused overgrazing in the areas where the fly problem is not so pressing, and permanent damage could be done on the Lake Ngami and Botletle pastures, which even a slight drought can turn into a dust-bowl. Twenty thousand to 30,000 cattle are to be moved into the reclaimed country.

* * *

Bechuanaland Protectorate Abattoirs, Ltd., of Lobatsi are about the most important industry in the country; for, except for the few cattle from Ngamiland that go to Rhodesia, all live-stock bound for the export trade pass through the Lobatsi abattoir.

The abattoir was originally financed by the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), and was then turned into a limited company. The CDC owned 50 per cent of the shares, and

the remaining 50 per cent were divided equally between the Government of Bechuanaland and a producers' trust.

The abattoir had a subsidiary company, the Export and Canning Co. (ECCO), to handle the marketing of its products. Sixty per cent of ECCO was owned by the abattoir and 40 per cent by a private company, Cyril Hurvitz Export Co. In February 1966 the government set up a statutory Meat Commission to take over the abattoir, the CDC having agreed to convert its investment into a loan; and the Commission are buying out Hurvitz's holding in ECCO.

ECCO has the exclusive right to the marketing of the abattoir's products after certain agreed amounts have been sold to the 'traditional markets', which are the Republic of South Africa, Zambia, Rhodesia, the Congo and the local butchers.* Neither the abattoir nor ECCO is entitled to sell more than these amounts in these markets, and there is thus every encouragement for ECCO to find and develop new outlets for Bechuanaland beef. One of these markets is Smithfield, where Bechuanaland chilled beef has been well received.

ECCO have built their cannery and cold storage facilities adjacent to the abattoir.

The abattoir was originally designed to take 300–350 head of cattle a day; throughput soon increased to 750 a day, and extensions were made which increased the capacity to its current figure of 1,000 a day. You see them waiting forlornly in the pens outside, in batches of a dozen at a time, until it is their turn to lay down their lives for the economy. They know little about the contribution they are making; as soon as they are inside the building they are slaughtered with humane killers and their carcasses hoisted on hooks to the floor where the processing takes place. This is all done with tremendous despatch – the carcasses are skinned, the offal is removed, the hoofs are cut off (but of course not thrown away), until what had been a sad-eyed African ox only a few minutes before has become a load of beef. It cannot be called a pleasurable sight for those unaccustomed to it.

After the gore of the slaughterhouse it is a relief to go to the more sterile purlieu of the cold storage and the cannery, where

*In 1964 the amounts were: 1,000 head per week to the Republic; 3,000 short tons per year to the Congo; 15,000 head per year to Rhodesia; and 20 carcasses per month to the local butchers in Lobatsi. The figures are negotiated periodically.

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the meat is chilled and packed for despatch, or converted into 'bully'. A good deal of Lobatsi tinned meat is sold under the world-wide brand names that speak from every grocer's shelf, but ECCO has brand names of its own as well. They are 'Ecco', for the finest quality, 'Purrox' for the next; 'Cormet' for corned beef, and 'Bexco' for corned beef with added cereal. But these are not at present to be seen in the British supermarket.

There are some 450 workers employed in the abattoir and the cannery, besides forty or fifty salaried staff. The first four Africans to join the salaried staff were appointed in 1964. But to some extent the whole population of Bechuanaland is involved in the undertaking, for every man in Bechuanaland is a cattle-man, more or less.

* * *

Ngamiland cattle go for slaughtering to Bulawayo in Rhodesia or to Livingstone in Zambia instead of to Lobatsi, in order to save the long dry trek south. They are trekked out along a 250-mile route to the extreme north-east corner of the country and cross the Zambesi at Kazungula. The arrangement is not an ideal one, since the Rhodesian market tends to buy at the season when beef prices are at their lowest; but the great advantage is that the route is not affected by the strict control over the movement of cattle to other parts of Bechuanaland that is maintained when foot-and-mouth restrictions are in force.

A similar difficulty, not so easily resolved, confronts the cattle ranchers of the Ghanzi area. Their beasts – approximately 6,000 head a year – have to be trekked 500 miles or so across semi-desert country where the waterholes may be 30 miles apart. Besides the incalculable wastes in loss of weight and grade, this involves the ranchers in expenditure of something like R4.25 per head, made up of drovers' fees, watering fees and death loss.

Various proposals have been considered for improving this situation. One scheme examined was to establish a second abattoir in Ghanzi and send carcasses and offal in refrigerated transport to Lobatsi for marketing. Another was the carriage of live cattle on specially designed lorries. The possibility of air transport has also been looked into. So far the plan viewed most favourably is for the setting-up of a small killing-plant at Ghanzi and the use of refrigerated trucks.

Cattle have other end-products besides beef. Two of them are

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of some importance – dairy products and hides. A third is of less importance, bone meal. One can get that out of the way in a sentence. There is a bone meal factory in Francistown that provides a market for the bones ‘which’, as the official handbook of the development plan has it, ‘accumulate throughout the country’; but its output is small, seldom more than 1,300 tons a year.



Francistown also houses a creamery. The cream processed here is an important source of income to the African cattle owners of the district and the Bamangwato territory beyond. In spite of this the creamery only makes small profits when indeed it doesn't make a loss. The dairy products are marketed through the South African Dairy Industry Control Board, of which Bechuanaland is a member, and bring in some R128,000 a year.

The trouble is that there are high overhead costs to be met at all seasons of the year, and there are only adequate cream supplies at some seasons of the year. Now that the capital has moved to Gaborone, it is hoped that the demand for Bechuanaland butter will rise enough to render this industry a little more stable.

The farmers in the Ghanzi region also eke out their livelihood with dairy produce, but only because they have to. When calves are deprived of cream, this reacts to the detriment of stock. The Ghanzi ranchers operate under exceptionally hard

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conditions, and the sale of dairy produce is forced on them by economic necessity rather than by choice.

Just outside Francistown, on the Shashi river, is a tannery which was originally opened in the optimistic belief that there would be a good market for the processed hides of wildebeeste, which the South Africans were using for the manufacture of mining boots. Unfortunately the habits of wildebeeste proved to be too unsophisticated, and the hides tended to show too many defects. However, there is an ample supply of ox hides from the Lobatsi abattoir, and the tannery is certainly viable. At one time a project was even being considered for making boots and shoes there; but the tannery manager, who was in charge of the preliminary enquiries, reported that he would find it hard to get enough workers locally whom he could train for the job, and in the end the scheme was dropped.

In Lobatsi there is a factory making soap from the fatty waste-products of the abattoir. It supplies a good deal of the coarse soap used in the country.

II. AGRICULTURE

ALL the Batswana are farmers, more or less, just as all of them are cattlemen. Until recently, however, it has not occurred to them that farming need be carried on at more than subsistence level; why grow more grain than you can eat? The only problem hitherto has been to grow enough to meet current needs, and in a country that lies under the constant threat of drought, drought that sometimes lasts for four or five consecutive years, this has not seemed an easy problem.

The aim of the Agricultural Department is to improve the natural resources of the country until it is not only self-sufficient in staple foods but also produces an exportable cash crop. There is nothing very difficult about the first half of this aim, apart from the task of persuading men to change the farming habits of generations. Quite remarkable results have been obtained by using the most suitable varieties of grain, ploughing in the winter to ensure moisture conservation, planting in rows instead of broadcast, to get the optimum plant population per acre, and eradicating the weeds that misuse the nourishment from the soil. A man farming by the old unenlightened methods may if he is lucky obtain one bag of sorghum to the acre in an average year. Farmers working according to the Department's simple but urgent principles have obtained as many as 16.

This is an exceptional yield, of course. There will always be factors present to keep the yield down. Bad enough is the unreliability of the rain. In a good year there should be some cyclonic rain falling in a good steady drizzle; but in a bad year, even if the rain appears it may fall in the form of convectional storms, sudden heavy showers that simply wash off the topsoil into the nearest river-bed. But worst of all, of course, is the ever-present threat of droughts. Average rainfall in the fertile east of Bechuanaland is of the order of 26 inches annually; in the desert centre and west it is as low as 10 inches.

Bechuanaland's Agricultural Department began life as the Dairy Department. During the second world war, each tribe turned over a certain area to 'war lands', and demonstrators

were supplied by the Department to show how extra corn could be grown. The experiment was not a success, as it happens; but out of it has grown the current extension programme, which was launched with funds provided under Britain's Colonial Development and Welfare Acts.

The hub of the scheme is at the training centre and experimental farm run by the Department at Mahalapye. Students at the training centre do a three-year course. The first 18 months are spent in academic work at the centre, and this is followed by a year in the field with a trained demonstrator and a final spell at Mahalapye. While they are at the centre, the students are paid, but not supplied with food; they are expected to live as they will have to live when they go out afterwards as demonstrators, and this means buying and cooking their own food and looking after their own quarters. Indeed at Mahalapye they have even *built* their own quarters.

All students are trained in every kind of practical work. 'They could strip a cultivator blindfold,' I was assured. The big brick lecture hall was built with funds donated by Oxfam; and Oxfam also provided the tools in the carpenter's shop.

This is how the extension programme works.

Interested tribesmen are enrolled as Pupil Farmers. These men should be able to lay their hands on a plough and the necessary oxen to draw it; if they haven't got them themselves, they can easily borrow them from their friends. The Department will then lend them other necessary tools, such as harrows and cultivators, and supply them with seed and with phosphates if necessary. Phosphates should not be needed when, as generally happens, there is a plentiful supply of kraal manure.

Under the trained demonstrators, the Pupil Farmers are then taught the techniques of winter ploughing and so forth, and instructed in simple rotation of crops. At first they are told simply to manure one crop in three each year. Later a more ambitious cycle is inaugurated – cow-peas or some other legume, maize and two years under sorghum; or legume, cotton, sorghum.

The increased yield they are likely to get immediately from these processes furnishes them with a cash crop with which they can buy further implements; but if they still can't afford them the Department will arrange a loan. It is not an exaggeration to

say that the increased yield comes immediately. I was told of a man of the Bangwaketse who had been getting 60 bags of sorghum from his 50 acres. The trained farmer next door to him lent him tools and showed him the new methods. In the next year, the same 50 acres provided him with 300 bags.

Once established, the Pupil Farmer goes on to become an Improved Farmer, and takes more advanced training in soil conservation and so on. Next he becomes a Progressive Farmer, which entitles him to wear a small round badge with a picture of a plough on it – a much prized medal. In his final stage, he is rated as a Master Farmer; and this is no light achievement. Master Farmers are very advanced farmers indeed. They own all their own implements, which are quite likely to include a tractor. They are empowered to interview and recommend other farmers for classification on behalf of the Department.

Farmers' committees are set up in the tribal areas to watch over farmers' interests. Normally they consist of two men from the tribe, two from the Department's extension scheme, and three appointed by the local farmers. These committees can examine farmers for promotion in the scheme, advise on the creditworthiness of applicants for loans, and so forth.

This growing devotion to agriculture means that an increasing area of the country is given over to raising crops. Luckily there is no shortage of land in most of the tribal areas. The two unlucky tribes in this respect are the Batlokwa and the Bamalete. Their lot is alleviated as far as possible by allowing them to move into other tribal areas, or at least to graze their cattle there. The Barolong have an individual system of land tenure which is described in Chapter 8, p. 75.

Where there is no limit to expansion, farms are tending to spread more and more widely. One new trend appearing as a result of this is that the big farmers are taking on permanent employees. The current wage for a farmhand in circumstances like these would be of the order of 25 cents a day.

The first example I saw of the agricultural extension scheme in action was the farm of a first-year Pupil Farmer a short distance from the training centre. The improvement in the standard, to anyone who has never seen the spectacle before, is truly dramatic. All that had been done in this initial stage was planting in rows instead of scattering broadcast, and a rigorous

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war on weeds; and in this first year the yield of sorghum was *four or five times* what it had been in previous seasons, despite a less than satisfactory rainfall.

This farm was being run at the time of my visit by the owner's wife, Mrs. Mokgodi; her husband was away at his cattle-post. Mrs. Mokgodi was herself busy in the field when we came to see her. She was very happy to pause in her work and chat with the Acting Director of the Agricultural Department and his Senior Agricultural Demonstrator. Having made such a good start, I asked her, what did she want next? Rain, said Mrs. Mokgodi.

This periodical absence of the farmer at his cattle-post is a handicap that is bound to continue as long as the Batswana live in their traditional way. It may be that when farmers find that they can amass undreamed-of wealth by concentrating on their crops they may grow to think that a visit to a distant cattle-station is a chore they can do without. On the other hand, cattle still retain their status value, and a wealthy tribesman is hardly likely to do without them.

The next progressive farms I saw were in the Bangwaketse country, not far from Kanye. Chief Bathoen is a very keen supporter of the agricultural extension service, and he has, or had then, a very fine Agricultural Officer, Mr. H. D. Going, himself Bechuana-born and a farmer by upbringing and by choice. Mr. Going had been at Kanye for 10 years when I met him; 10 years, he reckoned, was about the time needed to get a scheme like the extension programme thoroughly rooted. 'The next thing we must do,' he said, 'is to spend 10 years on animal husbandry.'

Mr. Going took me to see the Kanye farmers. We took with us an educationalist from Britain and an educationalist from the Bechuanaland Government; they happened to be in Kanye discussing education, but were as anxious as I was to see the farms and hoped if possible to find out something about the schooling of the farmers' families at the same time.

The results of the improved agricultural methods were plain to see. Clean, weed-free ranks of row-planted maize and sorghum towered reproachfully above the stunted and weed-entangled crops of their more conservative neighbours. I saw here a flourishing cotton crop, the first I had seen in Bechuana-

land. Bangwaketse and Barolong farmers have taken to cotton with enthusiasm and success. Bechuanaland cotton has proved to be of a very high quality, hardy, drought-resistant and picked beautifully clean – an important point, since any soil will downgrade the whole crop. The Bakwena too have begun to grow cotton, and it is also to be grown in the Naragha Valley in Ngamiland, which is being resettled after the clearing of the tsetse fly.

It was already late in the afternoon when our party arrived at the farms, and there were few people about. But we met a farmer, Mr. Jacob Matebele, and his wife, owners of one of the splendid crops we had been looking at. Mr. Matebele expressed his extreme contentment with what the government had done for him and his entire belief in the new methods of farming; and Miss Freda Gwilliam, the British educationalist, put some questions to him and his wife about how many children they had and where they went to school.

'They don't go to school,' Mr. Matebele admitted. They were, it seemed, 30 years old and upwards. However, Mrs. Matebele let slip the information that she had some small grandchildren living with her.

'And where do *they* go to school?' Miss Gwilliam asked.

Mrs. Matebele had a delightfully theatrical way of emphasising her points with flourishes of a naked knife-blade which she was holding. She gave a flourish now. 'I am teaching them myself,' she said. 'Teaching them farming.'

The most interesting farmer in the neighbourhood was not available. His name is Klas Sedikile, and if he is still living he is 129 years old. Before the railway came to Lobatsi, Klas Sedikile used to bring the mail to Kanye from Zeerust on a donkey. After the railway was built he still plied between Kanye and Lobatsi. While he was in his early 120s he was still a keen farmer; 'recently,' Mr. Going reported with regret, 'he's been getting a bit doddery.'

The most impressive improvement I saw was among the Barolong. The Barolong's system of land tenure (see p. 75) gives the farmer a greater feeling of security than in the other tribes, for he knows that the land is his at any rate until his death, whereas among the other peoples a man is working what is theoretically tribally-owned land. Whether or not this is the

reason for it, the Barolong have made the most astonishing progress in farming.

The party with whom I visited the Barolong farms consisted of the District Commissioner from Lobatsi and his Agricultural Officer, Mr. Titlestad; Mr. Molema, the Chief's Representative (the Chief himself lives in South Africa); and an African Agricultural Demonstrator, a tall, bucktoothed, happy man who was addressed by his friends by a nickname that signifies the Korhaan bustard, a bird that utters a comical rattling sound as it flies. We left the main road at Pitsane and drove along a dirt road to where the members of the Farmers' Association had assembled to meet us. They were oldish men for the most part; you would not have picked them out of a crowd as exceptional folk. But, starting three or four years before, they had made remarkable progress in farming. One of them now farmed 400 acres, another over 300. One, who had only a modest holding of 87 acres, was pointed out to me by Mr. Titlestad: 'He doesn't know it,' Mr Titlestad said, 'but he'll probably put £1,000 into the bank this year.'

The star farmer of the Barolong farms was unfortunately not able to be there. His name is Setuki, and he had given up driving a taxi in Mafeking four years previously. He now farms 800 acres, and is a wealthy man by any standards.

If this kind of progress can be made in so short a time, and by such simple means, how is it that Bechuanaland trembles so constantly on the verge of famine? One answer is that subsistence farmers are very reluctant to adopt methods that have not been sanctified by some hundreds of years of precedent; you can see, marching alongside the well-tilled acres of the progressive farmers, crops that have been dragged out of the ground by the traditional slapdash methods. These are the methods used by the great majority of the people; those who practise them must know quite well that they will reap only half a bag of sorghum to the acre where their neighbours will get three or four; but the force of tradition holds them in a relentless grip.

There are encouraging signs that this will die out in the foreseeable future. Already there are more than 1,000 Master, Progressive and Pupil Farmers in the territory helping to spread the good word, and the Agricultural Department's staff of demonstrators is being increased until it is hoped they can

raise this number to something in the region of 4,000.

The experience of having a cash crop to market is a fairly new one to the Bechuanaland farmer. He has taken well to the co-operative principle, and farmers' co-operatives have sprung up spontaneously in some places, and there is a government adviser available. The Barolong Farmers' Association is one such combination. One of their first activities was the building of a barn for storage; they built it themselves and are very proud of it as a symbol of their united effort.

It was outside this barn that we all assembled at the end of the day. The District Commissioner made a speech, and I made a speech saying how splendid I thought the Barolong farmers were, and the treasurer of the Farmers' Association made a speech hoping that I should do as their last visitor from England had done, and bring them some rain. (Alas, I didn't.) Then the Chief's Representative made a speech of exquisite courtesy, and the District Commissioner called for three cheers, or their Tswana equivalent – hearty cries of 'Pula!' *Pula* means rain; it carries in it all the most joyful emotions that a Tswana can feel.

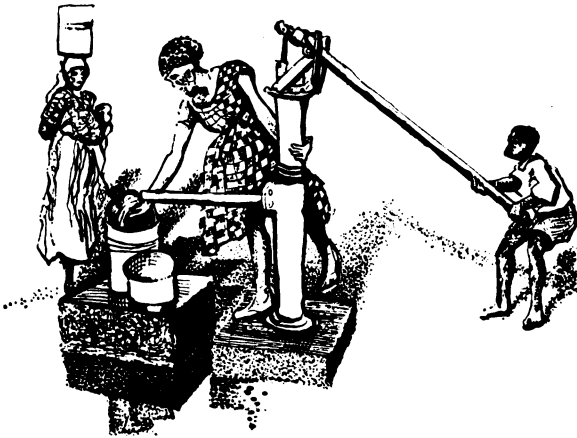
One question into which the Agricultural Department's experimental farm has gone very thoroughly is the choice of grain most suitable for growing in Bechuanaland's various conditions. The Department has 'screened' some 450 varieties of sorghum. Samples of different varieties are grown in small rectangular patches; and not only different varieties, but the same variety grown under different conditions. As the result of this research, three strains have been picked out as most suitable: a short red quick-maturing variety from Texas, and two improved varieties of indigenous strains – a slower-maturing Bangwaketse grain and a drought-resistant, early-maturing grain from the Bakgatla. Kalahari maize is being bred for planting in especially dry areas.

The Department is also responsible for investigations and advice concerning the introduction of new crops. Cotton has been the most successful so far; but other promising cash crops are soya beans, groundnuts, sunflowers and linseed. Jute is being tried in the Okavango.

In the Tuli Block, which is mostly farmed by European settlers able to call on modern methods requiring a fair amount

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of capital, other crops are grown, though not so far on a large scale – winter wheat, lucerne, citrus fruit, gladiolus bulbs. To raise these crops requires irrigation; there is water available for this, but it is not really as much as is desirable. One trouble is that the Limpopo has been excessively dammed higher up by the farmers of the Transvaal, and this deprives the Tuli Block of some of the water it ought to have. The Limpopo, which here marks the eastern border of Bechuanaland, is an international river. There should be some more satisfactory agreement on the use of its waters.



Pumping water from a borehole

12. OTHER INDUSTRIES

Minerals

NEXT to livestock and dairy produce and agricultural produce, minerals of various kinds form the most significant item of Bechuanaland's exports.

The most important of them is asbestos. This occurs at Moshaneng, a few miles from Kanye in the Bangwaketse country. At first it was mined opencast by the tribe under the direction of their energetic chief, Bathoen. This activity petered out after twenty years' sporadic operation, but in 1950 a concession was granted by the tribe to the Marline Chrysolite Asbestos Corporation, who now run the mine. Mining was started again in 1951, and a new mill was installed in 1962; current production is of the order of 200 tons a month, and the annual revenue this brings in to the tribe is some R12,000.

A great many Batswana work in the mines in South Africa, so there is always plenty of experienced labour. The manager of the Moshaneng mine told me that he reckoned there was a great deal of mineral wealth in Bechuanaland that was not being completely exploited because of the laws governing prospecting. If freelance prospectors were allowed into the country, he said, its resources would be far more completely worked.

There is a manganese mine in the same area, but the demand for manganese has not been sufficient to keep it going, though the ore has by no means run out. Manganese is also found at Ootsi, in the Bamalete territory. Small amounts of gold and silver are still mined, and for a time there was a brisk trade in kyanite, an aluminium silicate of which a deposit was worked near Francistown. The deposit is now exhausted.

Bechuanaland's current mineral production is, however, much less heartening than its potential production. For example, the valuable salt deposits in the Makarikari region are so far untapped. The Rhodesian Selection Trust are now working in the Sua Pan area, on the east side of the great pan, in conjunction

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with the Geological Survey Department of the Bechuanaland Government, and the results are promising. It is believed that 60,000 tons of soda-ash and 40,000 tons of salt per annum can be produced. They will be pumped 100 miles through a pipeline to a refinery on the railway line at Shashi.

The Rhodesian Selection Trust has also uncovered encouraging indications of copper, and the Geological Survey Department has carried out an examination of the coalfields near the railway line in the Bamangwato country. Substantial reserves of low-grade coal have been found, and efforts are being made to interest a mining company in them.

Tourism

Bechuanaland can offer nothing to compare with the Victoria Falls. It is on the whole a dull country to look at. But it has facilities to offer to the tourist that have the particular advantage of not having been previously exploited.

Its greatest attraction is undoubtedly the Chobe Game Reserve, which has recently been developed at a cost of nearly R80,000. The entrance to the reserve is at Kasane, where there is an excellent hotel. The only trouble with Kasane is that it is very hard to get at by road, unless one comes in from Zambia: Livingstone, on the railway, is only about 40 miles away. The internal roads are rough and seasonal.

I spent a day in the game reserve with the game warden, Mr. C. P. Hepburn. We began with coffee on the terrace of the hotel, which has some claim to describe itself as the most important institution Kasane can boast, for it will be the focal point for the patrons not only of the game reserve but also of the hunting safaris which are to operate in Ngamiland.

It therefore has to set a high standard of comfort. Wealthy tourists may raise their eyebrows when, having ordered coffee, they are served with three dishes containing powdered coffee, powdered milk and sugar, together with a jug of hot brown water from the Chobe. If so, they will have come to the wrong place. In fact, coffee on the terrace of the Kasane Hotel, where a grass bank slopes steeply down to the wide rushy river, and little brightly coloured birds and butterflies drift between the

shrubs, is the pleasantest possible experience; and any big game hunter who expects fresh milk on safari is living in a dream world.

There is also a tourist camp at Kasane, and another one 11 miles up river at Serondellas. These are available for fishermen as well as for visitors to the reserve; there is excellent fishing in the Chobe, especially for tiger-fish and bream.

The principal road through the game reserve is actually the main road south, so even those motorists who are only driving down to Francistown may have a sight of game as they pass through. (Not that anyone would drive down this road if he could help it.) But for genuine conducted parties a modest fee is payable on entry – 25 cents a head, plus 75 cents for a car. From the main road, small loop roads have been cleared through the bush to the places at which it is reckoned that game should generally be seen, and game-viewing points have been constructed. The reserve runs down to the river on the north side, which increases the chance of seeing aquatic birds and animals.

We had only gone a quarter-mile when Mr. Hepburn stopped the truck and pointed to the verge of the road. 'Lion kill,' he said.

It was a small buck, nothing much left of it by then, but still quite fresh. A look at the dusty surface of the road revealed a lion's pug-marks; lions, it seems, like to use roads when they are available. The marks ran side by side with the tyre-tracks.

We didn't see a lion, though; it was midday and all self-respecting lions would be asleep. What we saw most of were baboons; but in the more interesting categories we collected sable, kudu, bush-buck, waterbuck, lechwe and warthog, all plain to see from the road and near enough to photograph with a decent telescopic lens. At one point the greater part of a tree pulled down across the road in front of us indicated the recent presence of an elephant, and there was elephant dung in great quantities along the road; and when we were well on the way home, and had decided that we were unlikely to see an elephant that morning, there one was, standing squarely in the middle of the road in front of us. He moved a few yards off the highway when we approached, but stood there, splendidly photogenic, while we took pictures of him. I got out of the cab and went

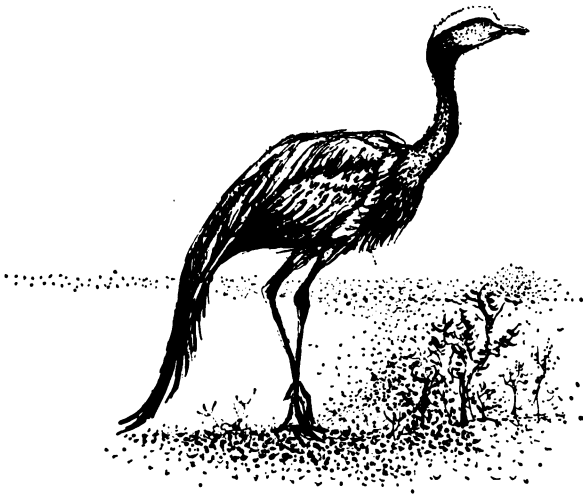
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round to the nearer side of the truck to get closer. The elephant took no notice. 'Do you think,' I asked Mr. Hepburn, 'he'd be angry if I went up there on the grass?'

'Yes,' he said, 'and so would I.'

He had, in fact, made some practical tests to gauge the safety of motorists among elephants. The nature of the test was simple: you find a herd of elephants, preferably of cows and calves since this is reputedly the most dangerous form of herd, and you drive your truck closer and closer until they begin to show signs of resentment. Actually Mr. Hepburn never did get a hostile reception, even when he drove right in among them. They were curious about him, and they pushed at him a bit, but without rancour.

Perhaps they were aware of his devotion to them. He mentioned that he had not taken any leave for two years. 'This is leave,' he said, waving his hand at the game reserve.



Stanley's Blue Crane

The birds of the Chobe Game Reserve are as fascinating as the animals. All Englishmen who go to tropical Africa turn instantaneously into bird-watchers, and the gorgeous diversity of African birds is an explanation in itself. Fortunate observers on the Chobe may see Stanley's Blue Crane, a rare and handsome great blue-grey bird. They will certainly see flocks of the

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big ugly ground-hornbills, grotesque when padding about on the ground, but wonderfully graceful when they take to flight.

Besides catering for visitors who want to see game, Bechuanaland can also cater for those who want to kill it. Big-game hunting of the highest quality is to be had in Ngamiland, and the country available for it has been parcelled out between five safari companies, each of which has been given exclusive rights to its own stretch of territory. Four of them have moved in from Kenya – a guarantee of confidence in the standard of hunting to be had – but the fifth, Southern Safaris, is a home-grown Bechuanaland undertaking.

There is another small game reserve, in the Batawana tribal territory, inaugurated on the tribe's own initiative. The Fauna Conservation Officer at Maun, Mr. Jack Ramsden, spoke to me about it optimistically. There were masses of game there, he said, and people could go in and stay as long as they liked and camp where they liked. He foresaw a good revenue for the tribe from it.

The site, which lies to the north of Maun, is awkward to reach at present, but it will become more accessible once the Francistown–Maun road has been brought up to all-weather standard. Although it has to compete with the Chobe Game Reserve and the Wankie Game Reserve in Rhodesia, it is said to contain some species not to be found in those parks. Mr. Ramsden's heart was very much in the project. It is not in game wardens to command success, but they can certainly deserve it.

13. BATSWANA OVER THE BORDER

AT the most recent estimate, there were about 65,000 paid workers among the Bechuanaland population; and of those, 35,000 worked in the Republic of South Africa.

This is an enormous proportion – it works out at some 12 per cent of the total potential labour force in the country – and at first sight it seems a rather regrettable circumstance. Closer examination reveals that it is only slightly regrettable from the social angle, and vastly beneficial from the economic angle, since almost half the money earned by Batswana* in South Africa is sent back to Bechuanaland in one way or another. The revenue thus gained is of the order of £500,000 a year.

Why do so many young men leave their reserves to work abroad? The answer is simple, though it can be cloaked in economic jargon until it sounds complex: there is no work for them in their own country. There are luxuries to be bought today, and amenities to be provided, that cost money. That old wind of change blows as keenly in Bechuanaland as in the Republic, and western-style clothes, proper houses and furniture, radio sets, bicycles and the rest are always in demand. You cannot buy these things by staying at home, ploughing in season, reaping in season, spending the due time at the cattle-post, so you look for work, and you look where the work is.

The effect on the life of the tribe is less than opponents of the system claim. For one thing, this has been going on for years, and is accepted as a part of normal life, as the French or the Swiss accept their military service. Consequently the tribal existence is geared so as to take it into account.

Young men tend to go at about that time in their lives when they are due for initiation into manhood. Tribal initiation ceremonies have been put down by the missionaries, and this serves as a substitute. The time they will spend abroad varies considerably; it may be under five years, it may be fifteen or more. But in any case it is usual for migrant labourers to come

*By 'Batswana' in this context I mean Bechuanaland nationals; there are any number of Batswana, tribally speaking, living in the Republic.

home from time to time and attend to their domestic problems; and in most cases, when they reach the age where they feel like marrying and settling down, they return to a normal tribal life without difficulty. There is a small wastage of men who decide to settle permanently outside the country, but not enough to cause concern.

The goldmines of the Witwatersrand provide the great majority of the jobs they go to, though a number are employed in industry. Recruiting for the mines is done by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (Wenela) and the Native Recruiting Corporation, and is strictly safeguarded by the labour laws. Batswana have been working in mines since 1870 or so, when they began to go to the Kimberley diamond mines, and mining is now as much in their blood as it is in that of the Welsh. So there is never any difficulty in finding experienced workers for the Bechuanaland mines at Moshaneng, Ootsi, and so on; and if some of the projects now being examined turn out well they too will find a full reserve of good labour.

One definite disadvantage of the tradition – for it is fair to call it that – is that there is a chronic shortage of adult labour in the tribal areas. Boys who once worked at the cattle-posts until they were old enough to marry now set out to seek their fortunes in the Republic as soon as they can. Their younger brothers take their places at the cattle-posts – very young indeed some of these cattle herders are, and their proper place is at school. The conflicting claims of education and labour look like meeting head-on soon. Education will most likely win, as education is the African's most cherished goal. What effect this will have on the traditional cycle of tribal life it is hard to say. No doubt there were employers in England who believed that it would no longer be possible to sweep chimneys if the supply of small boys was removed. Questions like these have a way of solving themselves.

A by-product of the mining proclivities of the Batswana was their remarkable effort during the last war. Recruiting for labour companies of the African Pioneer Corps began in June 1941, and by the end of the next year 24 companies, each 350 strong, had been raised.

Recruiting was done on a tribal basis; in fact in some tribes it was done by means of a *letsholo*, the tribal call to arms.

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'According to custom,' Alan Bent describes it in his book *Ten Thousand Men of Africa*, 'the *letsholo* took place in the bush away from the tribal capital, where it must never be. The first light of a June morning revealed thousands of Bamangwato tribesmen gathered in the bush in a tremendous council, waiting for the Chief; but he was already there among them in the dark, and before dawn he addressed them and told them in no uncertain terms what was expected of the tribe and of them all; at dawn the *letsholo* or war-shout was raised, and the men went back to their homes to await the expected calls for recruits.' The chief – it hardly needs saying – was Tshekedi Khama; and the Bamangwato raised eleven companies.

The Batswana took naturally to soldiering. In their original role as Pioneers, their training in the mines was especially valuable; later they were used to 'dilute' heavy AA regiments of the Royal Artillery. They saw service in Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Italy, Malta and the Dodecanese; among their achievements was the building, under the Eighth Army Sappers, of the Bailey Bridge across the River Sangro, which was the longest Bailey of its time.

* * *

The interests of Batswana workers in the Republic of South Africa are watched over by an Agent who has a busy office in Johannesburg. This office was originally opened in 1933 to collect the overdue taxes of goldminers from Basutoland, but its value was immediately apparent in many other respects, and Bechuanaland and Swaziland made haste to adhere to it.

Its functions are varied. It collects taxes. It conducts arrangements for marriages, the provision of medical care, and so on. Its representatives travel some 200,000 miles every year inspecting conditions of labour, and reporting back to the territories if these are obstinately bad. It maintains liaison with the South African Government's Bantu Affairs Department. It arranges for visits of chiefs and disseminates home news and official information. In general the office acts as a consulate for the three territories; only its staff, headed by Mr. Fleck, a former Swaziland government official, is more accessible than staffs of consulates generally are. For example, the office is always open on Saturday mornings, lunch breaks and public holidays, when it is most probable that its patrons will have time to call.

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The cost of maintaining the office, on a first floor above a motor agent's business, is about R70,000 a year, of which Bechuanaland is at present called on to pay 15 per cent, or R10,500. As the Agent succeeded in collecting some R56,000 in tax arrears in the last completed year, it is clear that the office is well worth maintaining.

14. MOENG AND THE PROSPECTS FOR EDUCATION

MOENG College lies some 50 miles off the main road. You turn east a little north of Palapye and follow a good road that takes you past the site of the former Bamangwato capital, now marked on the maps as Old Palapye; but you do not follow this road for long, but turn off along a sandy track that winds and twists through the bush until it debouches into the beautiful place which Tshekedi Khama chose for his tribal secondary school.

It stands at the head of a valley, and is plentifully watered by natural springs. It was formerly the great Khama's cattle-station, and there was a certain amount of filial piety involved in Tshekedi's choice of the site, as well as his practical concern with the water-supply and the health conditions. Tshekedi raised £100,000 for the building of the school by means of a levy on the tribe, and work was begun on it in 1947.

The main buildings are imposing, grouped together under the head of the valley with a wide green plain stretching out in front of them; but as always happens, additional buildings have had to be grafted on to the main plan, which rather mar the original overall conception. Even so there is not enough accommodation. The school was planned to take 250 pupils – boys and girls mixed – but the highest the roll has ever been is 240, and even at this figure it has been necessary to crowd nine boys into each of the boys' dormitories instead of the eight for which they were intended, while the girls have overflowed into a building meant to house the primary school, the clinic and the food store.

What is life like for a student at an African boarding school? Here is a description of 'A School Day at Moeng' by a pupil in Form Ib, G. G. Athlang, published in the school magazine *Lesedi*:

A school day at Moeng starts at half past five, we wake up very early in the morning and sweep our rooms. After that we come to school and have

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physical training. Then we begin classes, and have three lessons. Breakfast follows, after which we come back to school and have Assembly. We start classes again feeling quite fresh. At this time the weather is a little hot and some of us begin to feel lazy. We then have a short break of about thirty minutes to refresh our brains. We come back for classes for two lessons and then school is over. We go for lunch feeling very hungry. After lunch we rest for some time and then go to the sports field. With sports we have more work to do, for we run or play football. Soon after coming back we have our soft porridge and tea. Then in the evening we have studies in the Educational block. After only two hours it is over. At half past nine the bell rings for everybody to sleep whether you like it or not. You must sleep at that time, and if you are found walking about after the last bell you may be punished.

Mutatis mutandis, it is not so very different from life in an English boarding school, though the hours would seem pretty punishing to the average English schoolboy. In fact, the similarities become more marked the closer you look into them. I was somewhat taken aback when Mr. B. Thema, who was then the headmaster of Moeng and later Minister of Finance in Seretse Khama's government, led me into the first of the classrooms he showed me. Chalked in neat handwriting on the blackboard was the declension of *dux*.

Except for the understanding of the Latin mottos with which the local organisations are prone to furnish themselves (Bechuanaland Training Centre: *Patriam nostram aedificamus*, Bechuanaland People's Party: *Per angusta ad augusta*, etc.) I couldn't see any reason why a Batswana child should learn Latin when he might be learning Arabic or Kiswahili, and I told Mr. Thema this. The explanation, which of course I should have thought of at once, is that they have to pass examinations in which Latin may be taken and Kiswahili may normally not be; the whole syllabus of education in British-oriented African states, in fact, is based on qualifying the students to be honorary members of the English race.

I asked Mr. Thema whether he thought this was right. Clearly he did. The trouble is that if you remove a subject from the syllabus for Africans but retain it for Europeans, the feeling arises that the Africans are being deprived of something peculiarly valuable that they mustn't touch. The cognate problem, whether it is right for all teaching to be done in English, is a rather different matter. As it happens, Bechuanaland is happier

than most African states from the linguistic point of view, since Setswana is the mother tongue of the vast majority of its indigenous population; but clearly there can be no disadvantage in bringing up a nation to be able to speak the language of the Commonwealth they are – at present – likely to belong to for the foreseeable future and enable them to understand its other members.

The only reservation I make here is that there should always be a check at some point on the question of pronunciation. If Batswana teachers speaking English with their characteristic idiosyncrasies are the only examples heard by Batswana children, the idiosyncrasies will go on being intensified until a new tongue springs up as incomprehensible as the language of West Indians sometimes is.

The ratio of boys to girls at Moeng was at this time about three to one. It has at times been as low as half-and-half, but on the whole there is no doubt that the boys of Bechuanaland are keener on getting educated than the girls, who are more interested in getting married. In one of the classrooms where Mr. Thema took me I asked some of the boys if they thought it would be a good idea to have more girls around. To them this was nothing but a purely serious question, and their answer to it was No.

‘Why not?’ asked Mr. Thema, who I think was as much surprised as I was.

Girls, they explained, were very lazy, and they held the classes back.

Like all go-ahead schools in Bechuanaland, Moeng runs its own farm; since cattle and agriculture make up the greater part of the average tribesman’s life, it would be foolish not to. There is a herd of Afrikander cattle at Moeng, the only kind of cattle besides the common African scrub cattle that have been so far introduced into the country. The farm normally supplies the school with its own vegetables; but four years’ successive drought had so impaired the water supply that irrigation of the vegetable garden had temporarily ceased and vegetables had had to be ordered from Johannesburg.

The children play soccer and basketball, and there are the usual relaxations of school life – Scouts and Guides, concerts, film shows, debates, and so on. *Lesedi*, the lively school maga-

zine, from which I quoted Master Athlang's contribution, was begun by a teacher called Hanson who came to the school under the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) scheme and left a lasting impression. *Lesedi* is really rather a remarkable publication. There are, of course, endless pieces on African current affairs, for there is nothing the African enjoys so much as discussion. Vincent Segwai of Form V writes, in the issue which I have in front of me, on 'Are We Christians?' Kopano Kelebetse Chingapane writes on 'How Africans Regard Education'. Thomas Kalantle writes on 'What Will Become of Bechuanaland?' B. M. Setshogo, who can express himself in sentences like 'All over Africa neo-Churches have sprung up with dramatic suddenness' which might raise the eyebrows of English grammar-school teachers if they found them in *their* school magazines, discusses the development of the Church in Southern Africa. (*Magna est veritas*, he concludes, *et praevalebit.*) More impressive than these things to me were the verse contributions. I don't pretend that they are *good*, though as schoolboy work they are not at all bad:

What great comfort here to stay
Before going back to enrich this clay.
From whence we sprung there shall we end,
And our bodies to dust shall return, my friend.

What delights me is that they are there at all.

As for the letters from correspondents, I need only quote the heading of one of them, 'A One-party System as the Solution to Subversion in Africa', to show how very much in the swim the Moeng students are.

* * *

Not long ago it was seriously considered that Moeng should be closed. All the practical arguments are in favour of closing it, though all the romantic arguments are in favour of keeping it open. (Romantic arguments predominate among the pleas for the British public schools.) It is hopelessly isolated in its lovely valley site; maintenance alone was estimated for one year at some R14,000, exclusive of teachers' salaries. On the other hand you can understand the Bamangwato having a special affection for it (though of course it has long ceased to be an exclusively Bamangwato organisation). Moreover, when

you already have a school, designed and built as a school, and schools are what is needed above all else, the decision to discontinue one and apply its buildings to another purpose is bound to raise eyebrows. In the end the decision was reversed; but while the possibility of closure was present, and while at the same time a decision was reached to turn the Bakgatla secondary school at Mochudi into a primary school, it could be understood why the government's education policy was open to misinterpretation.

Really, the government's recent policy has been sensible and far-seeing. Secondary education in Bechuanaland did not exist at all before 1954, except at Moeng; pupils went to Tigerkloof or some other school in South Africa. When secondary education did begin in Bechuanaland, it was haphazardly organised; its characteristics are summed up in one blistering sentence in the Bechuanaland Government's handbook on the 1963-68 development plan:

The main weaknesses of a number of the existing secondary schools include unsuitable siting and planning, single-form entry, courses stopping short of the Cambridge School Certificate examination level, lack of adequate science courses, wastage of pupils, unprofitable dispersal of effort of a limited and inadequate number of suitably qualified teachers, inadequacy or a total lack of libraries and laboratories, and difficulties in connection with the selection of pupils for entry.

In the face of this situation the government decided on total reform of the secondary school resources of the country.

The plan was to centralise all secondary education in six schools, of which two would be new – one at Gaberones, to cater for the children of the new population there, and one at Serowe, more or less at the centre of the 'line of rail' along which the great majority of the population live. These would be three-form entry, five-year-course schools, and, it need hardly be said, multi-racial.

In addition three mission secondary schools, the Mater Spei School at Francistown, Moeding College at Ootsi and St. Joseph's College at Khale, would be expanded to five-year-course schools, having two-form, three-form and two-form entry respectively. One tribal school, the Seepapitso Secondary School at Kanye, would also be expanded as a two-form entry school.

The day secondary schools at Mochudi and Molepolole would be gradually closed. Existing classes would remain, but no new classes would be opened. The schools would become higher primary schools.

The features of the government's decision that aroused most opposition (apart from Moeng) were the closing of the schools at Mochudi and Molepolole, and the building of a new school at Serowe, where there was already a teachers' training college and a secondary school, where a new hotel was about to arise, and which might outgrow its water-supply.

The first point is easily answered; the schools were not producing sufficiently satisfactory results. The second is still to some extent contentious. As far as the actual expense of building the new school goes, the cost could have been met over 10 years by the saving in maintenance of the fabulously extravagant Moeng. As for the other secondary school at Serowe, it is an interesting but inherently unstable foundation that deserves a closer look.

* * *

Swaneng School stands on a little hill about five miles outside Serowe. It was founded in September 1962 as a private venture by Patrick van Rensburg, a political exile from his native South Africa. The tribe agreed to his starting a school there, and Mr. van Rensburg then began to write around for money to build it with. His success was such that he was able to start building in December of that same summer.

All teachers at Swaneng are volunteers. Including wives, who are expected to help with teaching or with some other branch of school maintenance, there were, when I visited the school, twelve of them; but naturally there is a certain amount of waste-age. However deep the well of good intention, even a school-master must live.

The school opened in 1963 with 70 children. At the time of writing, it had more than 200. The syllabus is the same as that at the other secondary schools (the same examinations have to be passed!) except that there is a class in French. A vast number of new African states have French as their official language, a fact liable to be overlooked in British or formerly British territories.

New classrooms of an experimental type were going up when

I visited Swaneng, that had one wall open – an economy in building and an advantage in ventilation. Much of the work around the school is done voluntarily by pupils and former pupils in their spare time, with no reward except to see the work go forward. The bush is being cleared to make a playing-field; foundations being dug for more classrooms; a swimming-pool is being excavated (which is to be filled by the water that runs off the corrugated-iron roof). The African Authority has been generous with gifts of land, and Mr. van Rensburg was planning to build a dam.

The trouble is that there is no constant source of income to run the school on. At the time when I spoke to him, Mr. van Rensburg had raised £12,000, and he had also committed himself to spend £12,000. It was literally true that at any moment he might find himself with a school on his hands and no money to run it with. This did not seem to daunt him at all.

The pupils at Swaneng get two lessons a week in social studies. I couldn't help wondering if they knew how interesting a social study they themselves and their school were.

* * *

St. Joseph's is situated at Khale, on the main road a little way south of Gaberones. It has, or had, extensive lands stretching across the road towards the South African border; but it has been necessary to swallow up a part of this in the new Gaberones dam. The lost lands had been used as a mixed farm.

St. Joseph's was founded by a German community of Oblate Fathers; but during the war the position of the Germans there became necessarily embarrassing, and control passed to Passionist Fathers from Ireland. It was an Irish father, Father Cosmas, who, in the absence of the headmaster on holiday, showed me over the school.

The buildings and the grounds are wonderfully well kept, and (as I always seem to find in Roman Catholic communities) the utilitarian is nicely tempered with the beautiful. There is a pretty little flower garden that is lightly wired in to guard against the incursions of game coming in from the bush. A kudu had in fact invaded the garden a night or so before and wandered about eating this and knocking down that. 'I tried to get a shot at him,' said Father Cosmas wistfully in his Irish voice, 'but I never had the chance of it.'

Although it is Catholic-run, St. Joseph's is not an exclusively Catholic school, and it seems likely that when it is absorbed into the general scheme the proportion of non-Catholics will increase, since places will have to be found for students from, for example, Mochudi (which is a Dutch Reformed stronghold) and Molepolole (a London Missionary Society town).

The staff are mostly Roman Catholic, but include non-Catholics too, and there is no discrimination in favour of any special denomination.

Father Cosmas was proud of the school's recent record in examinations. 'We had 100 per cent pass in Standard Six,' he told me. (Standard Six is about the educational equivalent of the eleven-plus.) 'Then, we had 25 out of 31 pass the Junior Certificate, and 100 per cent in Cambridge School Certificate.'

The buildings, both the classrooms and the residential blocks, are spacious and well designed, but of course inadequate. However, a new science block is planned.

We were sitting on the verandah of the headmaster's house, consuming tea and biscuits. 'The trouble is,' Father Cosmas said, 'too many of them want to go into white-collar jobs. They all seem to want to become civil servants in the government as soon as they have their certificates.' It is a pattern familiar enough from other countries. Later no doubt they will all want to be lawyers.

At Moeding College, further down the road towards Lobatsi, no one was expecting us and there was no one to show us around; but Mr. Sinombe and I walked round on our own. The current strength there, we were told by the Matron, whom we flushed from her quarters, was 120 boys and 69 girls – more than three times the original strength when the school opened in March 1962.

The nucleus of the staff came from Tigerkloof in South Africa when that establishment ceased to be available for secondary education for children from Bechuanaland. The routine is somewhat less stringent than that at Moeng: breakfast at 6.30, prayers at 7.30, work from 7.45 to 10.45, with a half-hour break at 9.45. Then dinner at 11, and games until 3 o'clock, when there is the final work period of the day.

As we went out, we met some of the staff amusing themselves with an air-gun. We stopped and talked to them, and one of

them showed us over his quarters. It was spacious and well equipped. The rent paid by the staff is based on 6 per cent of their salary, and this includes electricity.

I saw over the Seepapitso tribal secondary school at Kanye during my visit there. On that occasion teaching was in full swing, and very competent it seemed. But once again I was taken aback at the curious things it is necessary to teach African children in order to get them through examinations. 'We are discussing,' one teacher told me, 'the conflict between Church and State in fifteenth-century Europe.' How much time, I wondered, had been devoted to the conflict between church and tribe in nineteenth-century Bechuanaland?

The best thing I saw at Seepapitso School, I thought, was the Domestic Economy Wing, complete with sample bed to be made and sample flush lavatory to be kept clean. The tendency of students, regretfully noted by Father Cosmas, to set their sights on a white-collar job is clearly undesirable in a country where agriculture and livestock are the backbone of the economy. The prestige enjoyed by the progressive farmers is a significant pointer. If there were some kind of valid certificate in house-keeping or farming or animal husbandry that would carry as much status with it as the Cambridge School Certificate, this would be a significant step towards dragging education into the twentieth century.

* * *

Primary education in Bechuanaland, as in all other parts of Africa, is a thriving but inefficient industry. The demand for it is insatiable, the funds available for its gratification horribly limited. Many primary school classes are taken out in the open under trees. Some indoor classes are as big as 60. In Serowe there is, or was, a large hall in which six classes of 50 or so each all sat together, facing as far as possible in different directions. Many primary school teachers have only the very minimum of qualifications.

These unsatisfactory conditions have had the inevitable result. The proportion of first-year primary school pupils that survive the whole of the eight-year course is no higher than 6 per cent.

Buildings are the first priority, and two big new schools have been put up, one in Francistown and one in Serowe. In addition

to these, new classrooms are springing up like mushrooms all over the territory whenever some way of raising funds can be found. District Commissioners vie with one another in ingenuity; there are the new classrooms in Francistown partly built with prison labour, and in Serowe the District Commissioner was busy when I was there erecting experimental blocks in fours, two and two, so that each classroom has two party walls instead of one and money and time are saved on the job.

The cost of primary education is shared between the central government and the tribes, but the urgency of the matter has prompted the government to provide the money for the new schools in Serowe and Francistown (the two places where the overcrowding is most serious) and also to help as much as possible in other centres: R160,000 has been allocated for this purpose to cover the period 1963-66. It is also hoped that funds will be available from time to time from tribal surplus balances.

No amount of expenditure can conjure trained teachers out of the air. Bechuanaland has teachers' training colleges at Lobatsi and Serowe. I spent some time at the latter, which is brand new and very well-found, in some ways perhaps in discriminately well found. As the District Commissioner said, they'd have done better to spend money on mosquito screens rather than on parquet floors.

It runs a three-year course which culminates in the Primary Lower Teachers' Certificate. Accommodation is for 110 students; at this time the women outnumbered the men by six to four. The staff establishment is as lavish as the flooring – a principal, five graduate teachers, three Grade I teachers, and (Africa's best bargain) three VSO teachers. Application had already been made for four more Grade I teachers. The entering qualification for students is to have achieved Standard VI, which, as I have said, is roughly the equal of the eleven-plus, so that this scale of staffing is not so lavish as it may look on paper. To bring students from Standard VI to the point where they are qualified teachers in a three-year period is an undertaking in which one teacher to each 10 students is not such a luxurious provision.

Later, when secondary education is rather better established, the initial qualification for entry into the teachers' training colleges will be raised to junior certificate (taken two years before Ordinary level GCE). A two-year course will then take

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the student to his Primary Higher Teachers' Certificate.

At present well over half the teachers working in primary schools in Bechuanaland are not qualified at all, so it is clear that the work of the teachers' training colleges is enormously important. Without efficient primary school teaching, all the plans for secondary schools and higher education fall to the ground.

There is no university in Bechuanaland; but Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland share a university in Basutoland. Promising students may also find places at universities in Britain or other parts of the Commonwealth; and some Batswana students are sent to Britain for professional and technical courses not available locally, at the expense of the Ministry of Overseas Development.

Training of advanced artisans and clerical workers is carried on at the Bechuanaland Training Centre at Gaberones. It was originally devised to give training in such subjects as motor maintenance, building, carpentry, and so forth; but the imminence of independence, which will call for numbers of office workers and civil servants, led to the addition of clerical training to the schedule. Interesting work is being done in the building section, where experimental work on low-cost housing is being carried out. The specification called for a minimum size of 10 ft. $\times$ 8 ft. for the rooms, the walls to be of sound permanent construction, and the design to include proper windows and door, ventilation and lavatory.

The house I saw under construction had one 'reception' room and two bedrooms, a kitchen and a flush lavatory, though this was not built integral with the house. The windows were decent steel-framed jobs, and the roof, alas, was corrugated iron because the only reasonable alternative was thatch and the raw material for that was not available in sufficient quantity.

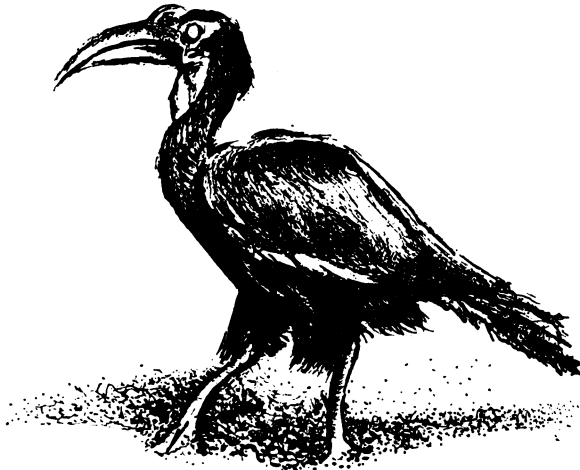
(Later, when I saw the enormous growths of reeds in the waters of northern Bechuanaland, I thought I had solved this problem. Why not reed thatch, as used in Norfolk and Suffolk? The objection is a simple one; reeds would make such a bulky cargo on board a truck that the cost of transporting them several hundred miles to Gaberones would be beyond all reason.)

By using permanent steel shuttering for the adobe (stabilised earth) walls, it was hoped that houses of this pattern could be put up in quantity for £100 each. The principal of the centre

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showed me a sketch of how the house would look when built. It had been given a tiny garden in front and a couple of shade trees, and could be very pretty.

The Training Centre arranges 'in-service' training as well as residential classes. It also runs evening classes, day-release classes and correspondence courses.



Ground Hornbill

15. SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Health

THE climate of Bechuanaland, tropical and subtropical, is a healthy one, and with one important exception the country has a good record for health.

The exception is tuberculosis, which is a serious problem. The medical services do all they can, but the real trouble is to get the sufferers to understand the real nature of their illness. Education, in fact, is almost as important as treatment in the control of disease, and in the five-year plan education has been given priority over health. You can offer the finest treatment in the world, but it is no use unless you have someone to treat. A vigorous campaign against tuberculosis is being carried on, both on the educational and the medical fronts.

In the swampy country in the north and north-west, malaria occurs, but it is rare in the south and east of the country, where the climate is drier.

There are hospitals at most of the larger centres of population, and health centres or dispensaries at many outlying places. Most of these are run by the government, but the missions do a great deal of work in this sphere. The Seventh Day Adventists run the hospital at Kanye (lately enlarged with the aid of Colonial Development and Welfare funds); the United Free Churches, the hospital at Molepolole; the Church of England that at Madinare; the Dutch Reformed Church that at Mochudi; the Roman Catholics that at Khale. The missions also send doctors or sisters to visit a number of out-stations.

The government pays the missions a subsidy to cover this invaluable work, though in fact the amount of the subsidies has always been far below the real value of the services provided. Subsidised mission hospitals and centres are subject to inspection by the government Director of Medical Services, and are obliged under their agreement with the government to provide services comparable with those available at equivalent government establishments.

Press and Radio

One of the adverse consequences of the sparseness of the population is inadequacy of news services. It would hardly be possible for a newspaper to survive if it depended only on its sales to the inhabitants of Bechuanaland, scattered widely over the land, sometimes a week or ten days away from the railhead.

On the other hand, it is unthinkable to leave the population without any news service. The newspapers that do come in are from South Africa and Rhodesia, but no one could call the distribution arrangements good. The Johannesburg papers arrive at Mafeking on the train at 6 o'clock in the morning, but for some reason they do not get as far as Lobatsi, 40-odd miles further on, until 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Moreover, although the Johannesburg *Star* and *Sunday Times* are as liberal as they can be in existing circumstances, they can hardly be thought of as representative of modern African thought; while at the time of writing the Rhodesian papers coming in from the other end of the line of rail are scarred with aching voids wherever editorial opinion has conflicted with the *diktat* of the current régime.

A valiant effort was made in the little *Mafeking Mail* to include news from all over Bechuanaland (its energetic printer and editor, Joe Podbrey, did most of the government printing so long as the headquarters was in Mafeking); but with the transfer to Gaborone this outlet was lost. The Bechuanaland edition of the Johannesburg *African Echo*, which was officially recognised to the extent that it got a small government grant, ceased publication some time ago.

For African readers there is a well-edited and well-produced monthly review written partly in English and partly in Setswana, *Kutlwano*. The Information Branch also publishes a fortnightly news-letter and a daily summary of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly when it is in session; but here again distribution is a problem and there are places where these will not arrive until days after they are published.

As four-fifths of the population of Bechuanaland live along the line of rail, it is tempting to suggest that a local newspaper produced at a point half-way along this route, say at Mahalapye, would be well placed to reach most of them reasonably quickly

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if distributed by road, and even, to the outlying districts, by air, as only a small number of copies would be involved at first. To expect such a project to pay for itself, however, is beyond all expectation.

To add to the lack of a proper press service, there is an equal shortage in the radio department. In Gaberones, a pilot project is operating pending the installation of new transmitters suitable for a worthy broadcasting service. This pilot station began life in a disused prison cell at Lobatsi, where it was worked up from scratch by the then Press Officer, Ainslie Gratwicke. It was never considered as much more than a medium for the training of staff and the gaining of general experience. It opened only for an hour and three-quarters each evening, broadcasting popular music (the Beatles have an appeal that transcends all barriers of race and culture), local news in Tswana and English and news bulletins and commentaries taped from the BBC's overseas service. It could be heard fairly well over a radius of 300 miles.

In 1964 and 1965 the British Government made two grants to Bechuanaland totalling just under £120,000 for the establishment of a proper broadcasting service. Medium- and short-wave transmitters will give good coverage of the whole territory. 'Commercials' are to be accepted to help meet running expenses. The improved signal and extended programmes, a large proportion of them in Tswana, will give residents something more to listen to than the South African, Rhodesian and Zambian broadcasts and the almost continuous programme of light music and commercials, on the pattern of Radio Caroline or Luxembourg, transmitted from Lourenço Marques.

Social Welfare

In the tribal areas, social problems are the responsibility of the tribes, and are satisfactorily dealt with under existing tribal laws and customs. This situation is bound to deteriorate as big urban townships grow up where tribal influence is less authoritative, in Francistown, for example, Lobatsi and Gaberones, and welfare centres have been provided under government auspices. The big centres of population in the tribal territories have been

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provided with welfare centres on the same lines under tribal arrangements, but welfare officers to run them are not so easy to find from tribal resources.

There is a tendency for welfare activities to concentrate at the capitals, and special efforts are being made to encourage community development at village level. Suitable individuals are being sent to Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia for training in this field; when they come back they are set the task of persuading the people of small communities to organise their own welfare services, using local resources wherever possible. The multifarious activities at Serowe, ranging from a boys' club to a Mothers' Union, provide an excellent example to smaller communities. They also show the great value of having a whole-time welfare leader on the spot.

Such organisations as Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are being encouraged, and sporting activities of many kinds, of which the most popular is soccer.

16. THE WAY AHEAD

HAPPY is the nation that has no history. By this standard there can be few nations in Africa today happier than Bechuanaland, for apart from the inter- and intra-tribal conflicts normal to the African continent before its emergence into modern life and thought, its record is remarkably free of incident of any kind. The Batswana offered an equally friendly reception to missionaries, traders and soldiers alike when they came to offer their various receipts for happiness, and since the British drew a line on the map and said 'This is Bechuanaland' they have lived quietly and undemandingly for seventy uneventful years.

If they had been less quiet and undemanding during what Mr. Matante calls those 'seventy years of neglect' it might be that there would be less leeway to make up today. On the other hand to begin an era of self-rule without a previously existing structure to break down is something of an advantage. Bechuanaland's government has no backlog of racial discrimination to break down because such a thing virtually never existed in the country. The way is clear to concentrate on the business of good government without having first to clear away a mess of usage, custom and prejudice that may have had a useful function in its day but has none in a modern world.

There are two main difficulties that seem likely to occupy the government's attention in the immediate future.

The first is the country's lack of natural resources. By the time the five-year development plan is completed in 1968, a first step will have been made towards eventual financial self-sufficiency; but no one expects Bechuanaland to be able to balance her budget by then without outside help. By cruel bad luck, moreover, the country has been suffering for the past four or five years from a crippling drought that has decimated the cattle population on which the economy so much depends.

The second is the uncomfortable two-way pull that Bechuanaland is likely to undergo for some time from its neighbours. The nation's prosperity depends absolutely on close relations with the Republic of South Africa. If the new, self-consciously African

states elsewhere in the continent were ever to feel that the time had come to take positive action on behalf of the Africans in South Africa, it might put Bechuanaland in a difficult position. A preview of the situation on a smaller scale can already be seen in the case of Rhodesia.

These are side-issues, though, compared with the main task of building up a nation strong and confident enough to make its influence worth courting. Bechuanaland's progress, from the cushioned ease of protectorate to the pride of fully fledged independence, is happening with a speed that might have been judged impossible even twenty years ago. *Arbores*, as they say at Moeng, *serit diligens agricola quarum aspiciet baccam ipse numquam*; or, loosely translated, even the most progressive farmer may not live to harvest cotton in the Kalahari. What is vital is that he should believe in his son's and his son's son's ability to do so.

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